

Enhancing Business Thinking Through Checkers & Chess:

30 Key Cognitive Connections



**2023 – Volume I
Govert Westerveld**

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to the young
draughts players around the world

Foreword

Writing this book has taken me many years of research work.

Due to my previous work as a researcher in new products, new applications, and the history of the Spanish Civil War, one becomes automatically critical and cannot believe everything one sees and hears. It remains important to review everything many times and potentially test evidence with other scientific information. By studying American patents related to active ingredients for the pharmaceutical and aroma-chemical industry, I also gained insight into these sectors. Three years working in the pharmaceutical industry provided me with valuable experience and knowledge necessary to understand the complexity and importance of this industry. After this initial experience in the pharmaceutical industry, I have worked closely with various players in this sector for the past 30 years. This included working with pharmaceutical companies, research institutes, universities, and health organizations. During this period, I have been engaged in various aspects such as innovation, quality assurance, market analysis, and regulatory issues. In short, my experience in the pharmaceutical industry and long-term involvement in this sector have enhanced my knowledge of pharmacy.

Strangely enough, all those years I really felt like I was playing checkers in the business world because I used many attributes related to the game of checkers. The most fascinating were the temptation tricks used in checkers that lead to your downfall. The word "death" was still used in Dutch checkers books in the 19th century, after which the term "loss" was used. In the Spanish version of checkers, they still use the term "death": "estas muerto" (you are dead).

Yes, temptation tricks are also used in daily life and business to persuade someone to make a purchase, participate, or take a certain action. They tap into desires, curiosity, and emotions, with the aim of enticing someone to take the desired step. These tricks can range from creating a sense of scarcity or exclusivity to using enticing offers, discounts, or rewards. The ultimate goal is to influence and seduce the consumer or user into making a decision that benefits the one using temptation tricks. It is important to be aware of these tactics and to question whether they are truly in our best interest before taking action.

These temptation tricks are called "baiting" in the game of checkers and often lead to an immediate loss of the game. Of course, I always took into account the "baiting" in the business world. The fact that this perspective was not really unusual is supported by the words once uttered by Harm Wiersma:

"Checkers is like everyday life. Checkers involves everything, everything related to daily life is reflected in checkers. Concentration, determination, thinking ahead, relativizing, imagination, aggression, luck, sadness, making mistakes, correcting mistakes, and

also psychological aspects. Checkers is complete, but that's only the case when you reach a certain level."

The sum of these attributes that are present in both the game of checkers, chess, and active business life can be described as "entrepreneurial skills". Just as a checkers player must consider various aspects of the game to succeed, an entrepreneur or professional in the business world must utilize a range of skills to be successful in a competitive and dynamic environment.

I have had the great privilege of being able to follow the achievements of a childhood friend, Harm Wiersma, and we later met in Spain. He was a 6-time world champion and is the perfect example of what can be achieved with the attributes of the game of checkers in business, politics, academia, and our societal careers. In that sense, he stands at a higher level than Ton Sijbrands, who is solely focused on the game. On the other hand, Wiersma was not only a player but also a businessman and even a member of parliament in The Hague for a political party. In the conversations I had with him, the word "drive" always emerged.

I will attempt to present the attributes that are improved through playing checkers, and there are many. Both of us have been able to utilize these attributes in our societal careers. While discussing these attributes, Wiersma's name comes up many times. Hopefully, this first part will be an inspiration for young checkers players and chess players.

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1 CHARACTERISTICS

1.1 Abstractive Capacity

The abstractive capacity is a term seldom used in the game of checkers¹, but it is intricately connected to it.

The abstractive capacity refers to the ability to comprehend ideas that are not presented in words or numbers. It involves abstract reasoning, abstraction, analytical thinking, and generalization. It requires insight into the relationships between objects, patterns, diagrams, or designs.

Abstraction, as an exercise of the mind, is useful when we want to isolate qualities or attributes of things. The isolated quality or attribute can then be subjected to our mental faculties. It is within this process that pattern recognition finds its roots. Continuously abstracting the world around us allows us to perceive the essence of things, namely, the essential quality or attribute of a thing. These stored essences are then compared and either converge or diverge into patterns.

A key quality that chess players, checkers players, and bridge players must possess to reach the top is experience. By experience, we mean what Prof. Dr. A. D. de Groot called "experience-in-a-narrower-sense" in his thesis "The Thought of the Chess Player." One plays, analyzes, and studies a lot, but what truly matters is what one learns from it. This is where the abstractive capacity comes into play. The greater and more refined this capacity is, the better the player. One plays and analyzes one's own games or matches, studies those of others, and, above all, compares,

¹ American term for draughts (Great Britain).

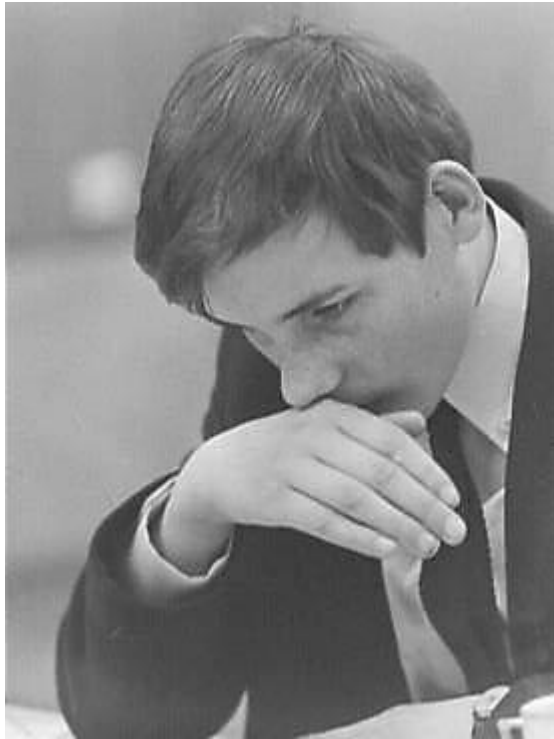
classifies, and reduces them to a number of basic forms, with or without exceptions. Through this process, one learns that in a certain type of position, this or that is strong or weak, which can be an isolated pawn, an edge piece, or a singleton. The wider and more intricate this pattern is, the stronger the player. It is evident that the level of abstractive capacity is a matter of talent, of aptitude, but it has also been established that the core of that aptitude can only be developed through "experience-in-a-broader-sense," through doing a lot. To reach great heights, one must have had a chess, checkers, or bridge mania, preferably at a young age. It should be noted that all these processes often occur unconsciously.

Making a good move in a game involves more than just careful observation and avoiding the search for the best move. A checkers player who relies on common sense and does not delve into profundities, who pays attention and does not overthink, can fare decently. However, he is not yet a strong player. Additionally, he must learn not to see too much. This might sound extreme, but it is true: strong checkers players see much less than weaker ones. Every aspiring checkers player knows all too well that he sees too much: jungles filled with variants and confusing tangles of possibilities. Bewildered, he tries to find his way through them, to no avail. Strong checkers players see far fewer difficulties and possibilities; the very strongest see very little, but they know where to look. A strong checkers player does not calculate more or deeper than a weaker one; he probably calculates with greater precision. But the strong player is strong because, at a glance, he can see what he can or must do in a given position. He sees very few variations and possibilities precisely because he started off on the right track from the

beginning. The weaker player is weak because he doesn't know where to go. He sees a vast field of possibilities, overburdens himself with calculations, and still does not know what to do.

The abstractive capacity of checkers players refers to their ability to analyze and understand complex checkers positions by recognizing essential patterns and strategies, without getting entangled in details. This capacity enables them to think on a higher level of abstraction, focusing on the key elements of the position and underlying concepts. Checkers is a board game with high complexity, with players having 100 pieces on a 10x10 board. This high level of complexity means there are countless possible move combinations, requiring players to abstract to develop effective strategies. Professional checkers players have years of experience and practice playing the game, enabling them to recognize common patterns, tactics, and plans. They can quickly assess positions based on these patterns and plan appropriate moves. This abstractive capacity allows them to make swift decisions during the game and avoid potential pitfalls. Additionally, talented checkers players can often see complex combinations that can lead to victory, considering many moves ahead. This requires deep abstractive capacity to understand the potential consequences of various moves and counter-moves. The abstractive capacity of checkers players is comparable to that of chess players, but checkers differs in complexity and playing style, presenting unique challenges for the players. Nevertheless, it is generally true that successful checkers players excel in abstraction and pattern recognition to enhance their game and develop effective strategies.

The level of amazement reached its peak in 1967 when Harm Wiersma managed to hold his own at the international level against the great Russian checkers stars such as Koeperman, Andreiko, and Tsjecholew. World champion Ir. Iser Koeperman, in particular, could not stop praising the fantastic talent of the fourteen-year-old Harm Wiersma, even after he had barely secured a draw against this young Frisian. Interest grew both nationally and internationally. In Russia and Italy, Harm even drew more crowds than Ton Sijbrands, despite the latter being the clear favorite for the 1968 world championship.



Harm Wiersma in 1967

Despite the immense publicity and invitations, Harm remained the same unassuming and likable

schoolboy. He was not yet considering preparing for a potential world championship. Naturally, he sat behind the checkers board regularly, as checkers was a beloved hobby and fantastic sport for him. However, Harm spent much less time on checkers than other top players. His great strength did not lie in theoretical knowledge but in his power of concentration. Without forcing himself, he could focus entirely on a game for five to six hours. He consistently refused to eat or drink during a game, and this complete commitment often led to success.

In the captivating nature of the game of checkers, grandmasters are incessantly confronted with the vibrant complexity of positions and challenging situations, where a wealth of possibilities and moves unfold before them. The abstractive capacity liberates them with refined elegance, allowing them to discern the core elements of the position, perceive elevated patterns, and distill intricate strategies and plans with masterful ingenuity that may not be immediately evident.

The fervent brilliance of their resourcefulness ignites flames of unexpected moves, astonishing combinations, and disturbs the equilibrium of opponents, who are compelled to undergo a dance of distraction. Proficient in the art of creation, they can exploit the weak points in their opponents' fortresses with surprising enthusiasm, utilizing extraordinary tricks and unusual tactics to gain an advantage. And that, indeed, was one of the many strengths of the young Harm Wiersma in 1967:

Clever as he is, he often plays moves that other players would reject at first glance. Harm ponders, attempts to refute all possible counter-moves, and, in the end, his moves reveal a depth that one would not expect from a fourteen-year-old.

1.1.1 Business

In the essence of the business world, the abstractive capacity shines like a precious diamond, an indispensable tool to navigate the mysterious depths of complex business questions and situations. A masterpiece of thought that allows us to pierce the veil of confusion and behold with clear eyes the essence of things. For in abstraction lies the ability to weave the golden threads of essential patterns, traverse the surging waves of trends, and embrace the epic core aspects, while freeing ourselves from the web of superfluous details that could deceive our minds' eyes.



Behold, this splendid attribute of the abstract bestows upon us numerous beneficial advantages and opportunities in the business universe, which harmoniously mirror one another like a symphonic concert:

Strategic decision-making:

In the lush gardens of strategic decision-making, where important choices flourish like majestic trees, the abstractive capacity flows like a refreshing spring. Those adorned with it are elevated to visionary leaders who comprehend complex market data, competition analysis, and business performance, unraveling the foundations of success.

Problem-solving, innovation, and creativity:

Thus, the darkest shadows of problems are revealed in radiant light through the abstractive capacity. Hearts of business professionals who possess this gift are filled with a sea of innovative and effective solutions, and their minds are cradled in the arms of creativity, where new ideas appear as sparkling stars in the sky.

Risk management:

A true shield of protection, forged by the abstractive capacity, arms courageous decision-makers against the tumultuous waves of risks and opportunities that populate the seas of the business world. A dance of connections between diverse factors leads them to the right path, where they take proactive measures to tame risks and reap the fruits of opportunities.

Communication and leadership:

In the temple of communication and leadership, where powerful voices resound, the abstractive

capacity becomes a truly precious instrument. Leaders, with one hand in the abstract and the other in reality, speak with clarity and communicate complex ideas and strategies in an understandable and concise manner, touching the hearts of their audience.

Market trends and customer behavior:

And behold, in the oracle of market trends and customer behavior, where future truths hide, the abstractive capacity appears as an insightful prophet. Its clear eyes reveal the big picture of market trends and changes in customer behavior, enabling businesses to adapt to the whims of time and renew themselves to meet customer needs.

Oh, how much the essence of the business world is shaped by this extraordinary abstractive capacity, like a lighthouse guiding us through the stormy seas of complexity. It brings illumination and depth, reveals new horizons, and opens doors to well-considered decisions. An invaluable skill that elevates the business world and leads to glorious triumphs.

1.2 Acumen

Undoubtedly, the fusion of chess masters' abstraction ability with their sublime acumen is a symphony of ingenuity and creativity. The concept of acumen, praised as the art of invention and the essence of resourcefulness, manifests in the ability to forge creative and unexpected solutions from scratch, tailor-made for the most profound complexities that thrive in the enchanting game of draughts.

In the captivating nature of the draughts game, grandmasters are incessantly confronted with the effervescent complexity of challenging positions, where a treasure trove of possibilities and moves unfolds before them. Abstraction liberates them with refined elegance to discern the core elements of the position, perceive elevated patterns, and distill masterful ingenuity in devising capricious strategies and plans not readily apparent on the surface.

The fiery brilliance of their acumen ignites the flames of unexpected moves, stunning combinations, and blurs the equilibrium of opponents, who are compelled to dance to the tune of dispersion. Adept in the art of creation, they can seize with surprising eagerness the weak points in their opponents' fortress and gain an advantage with extraordinary artifices and unconventional tactics.

This precious treasure of acumen in the game of draughts is undeniably praised as a cornerstone, for the game constantly whispers in their ears about the quest for triumphant combinations, the art of

eloquent maneuvers, and the subtle unraveling of possibilities to ruthlessly confound their adversaries. As virtuosos in orchestrating thought, this attribute grants them the freedom to think fervently and orchestrate with unbridled creativity the finest moves in the diverse game of draughts.

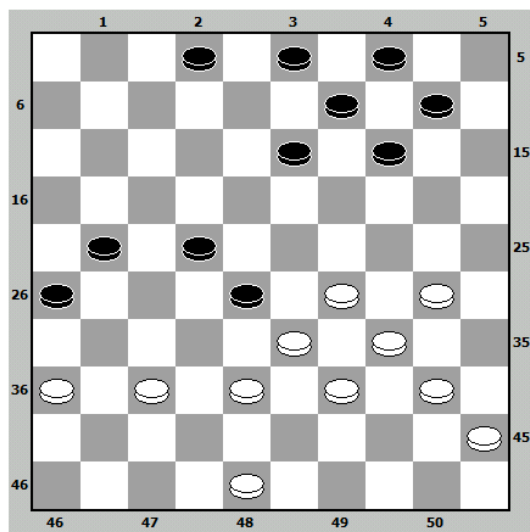
Abstraction ability and acumen of draughts players go hand in hand in harmonious union, as the capacity to decipher and comprehend abstract patterns unleashes a spectacular arsenal of ingenious solutions that effortlessly and resolutely attack complex problems within the fascinating game of draughts.



Bernard Robillard

How can one explain that the 16-year-old Haitian, Robillard, outpaced the favorites, especially the Dutch and Russians, in the 1974 Youth World Championship? Undoubtedly, he did not know as many openings as those players. But he proved to be a better player, fighting better in all circumstances.

Even in analysis, he demonstrated great acumen. In the first round against C. Hostee (Netherlands), he began with the following surprising victory.



1.30-24 3-8 2.40-35 21-27 3.45-40 8-12
 4.24-20 14x25 5.29-23 28x19 6.38-32 27x29
 7.34x5 and white won.

The amazement grew in 1967 when Harm Wiersma managed to hold his ground at the international level against the great Russian checkers stars such as Koeperman, Andreiko, and Tsjecholew. Especially world champion Ing. Iser Koeperman couldn't stop praising the fantastic talent of the fourteen-year-old Harm Wiersma, after barely securing a draw against this young Frisian. The interest both domestically and internationally continued to grow. In Russia and Italy, Harm even attracted more audiences than Ton Sijbrands.

1.2.1 Business

In the business world, ingenuity resonates like a skillful masterpiece of intelligence, acumen, and resourcefulness, guiding us through the depths of complex business issues, challenges, and opportunities. It is the ultimate power of ingenious minds that find cunning, unconventional, and innovative solutions to the most layered problems and seize unseen opportunities that others might overlook. Ingenuity unlocks the gates of daring thinking, sprouts original approaches, and unveils groundbreaking strategies.

In the business world, ingenuity manifests as a precious gem for entrepreneurs, managers, and professionals at all levels. There, the impressive facets of ingenuity unfold in full light:

Problem-solving:

Ingenious souls unravel complex business puzzles from unexpected perspectives. They think "out-of-the-box" and forge clever solutions that others may not have considered.

Innovation:

The essence of innovation rests on ingenuity. It gives birth to new ideas, makes new products and services bloom, and ventures into new markets. Innovative companies and pioneers often bear the hallmark of ingenuity.

Entrepreneurship:

Successful entrepreneurs often excel in ingenuity. They recognize opportunities where others see only obstacles and take risks with new business ideas.

Competitive Advantage:

Ingenuity can offer a competitive advantage in a saturated market. Through distinctive strategies and approaches, companies can rise above their competitors.



Flexibility:

Ingenuity enables adaptation to changing circumstances and swift responses to unexpected challenges. It uncovers alternative solutions when traditional plans fail.

Creative Marketing:

In the world of marketing and advertising, ingenious campaigns capture attention and leave a lasting impression on the audience.

Problem Identification:

Ingenuous minds quickly grasp the core question of a problem and shed unnecessary details. This allows them to use their time and resources more efficiently.

Spotting Business Opportunities:

Ingenuity helps in recognizing business opportunities, even in seemingly challenging situations. It discovers positive outcomes where others see only problems.

Quick Decision Making:

Ingenuous individuals think fast and make decisions when the need is great, especially in urgent situations.

Employee Engagement:

An undeniable element, employee engagement rises like a majestic lighthouse, illuminated by the rays of ingenuity. Leaders who display this brilliance ignite passionate enthusiasm and inspire their employees to behold and cherish the fountain of creative and innovative thinking.

In the vast horizon of the business realm, ingenuity manifests as an immeasurable, elusive, and invaluable treasure, guiding individuals and companies on their journey to triumph. The inner threads of critical thinking, creativity, courage, and an open mind intertwine into a labyrinth of possibilities, where new horizons reveal themselves, and the march towards progress continues tirelessly.

1.3 Adaptability

The impressive performances of Ghestem in the dam-six tournament in Rotterdam, where he finished equal with Roozenburg, provide a better measure to assess his strength in 1947. In these matches, the Frenchman demonstrated a vibrating technique, founded on an almost flawless adaptability to every variation that may arise in the game. For this reason, he appears to be the favorite in his battle against Keller. However, the Dutch champion opposes this with his orthodox and almost dogmatic style of play. The stoic composure with which the aging Keller will undoubtedly face the youthful vitality of Ghestem promises an intriguing contest.



Baba Sy against 150 opponents in The Hague, 1962

Most grandmasters can play simultaneous games without any problem. Often, they face more than 20 players, and there are many known cases where they faced as many as 50 opponents. This way, we learn

that grandmasters can adapt swiftly without much difficulty since the situation on each board is different.

World champion in draughts, Alexei Tsizjov, also showed great adaptability against the challenger Ton Sijbrands in 1990. In the 9th game, we see the defending champion once again taking his beloved outpost, but Sijbrands immediately exchanged it:

“As a result, classical play was more or less avoided, and Tsizjov had to adjust his strategy. Remarkably, the Soviet grandmaster required little time for this altered approach.”

Impressive is the great adaptability of the former world champion in draughts, Harm Wiersma, who tackled the strangest products and opportunities in the business world. He himself said the following:

"Adapt, you must always be able to adapt. Let's be honest: the world is one big chaos, where you must impose your own structure. You have to determine your own reality. And that can be difficult."

Wiersma has undertaken many foreign trips as a draughtsman, which required significant adjustments since food and customs vary in each country. Thus, adaptation goes beyond the playing systems on the draughtboard; it also involves adjusting to local customs. In this regard, the patience and concentration skills acquired through draughts prove valuable in new situations. Consider the situation in Mali:

“The games were played on original African boards, with pieces that were sometimes difficult to distinguish, and furthermore, each draughtboard was different. Adjacent to the playing hall, there was a drum band, creating less than an ideal atmosphere for playing draughts. Africans make moves during a

simultaneous game when it suits them. As a result, each round takes on average twice as long as usual, and the opponent hardly makes any mistakes. Every game must be won positionally, and you are not playing against one player but against the entire city.”

The sports psychiatrist Ferdi Oyen also shared his opinion about top draughts players, who must be versatile in many areas:

"Summing up, we can say that ambitious mind-sports players must consciously address and consider several elements within their sport. They must realize that they engage in a sport that demands a lot from a person on all levels, even beyond draughts. You must adapt your life to it. You must prepare yourself not only on the technical/theoretical level but also on the physical and mental aspects that come with draughts. Indeed, playing draughts at the highest level involves much more than people often think."

1.3.1 Business

In the vast realm of international business, adaptability and language proficiency reveal themselves as two extremely important pillars, imbued with profound significance and breathtaking complexity. These concepts form a cosmic symbiosis that is essential to achieve international triumphs in various ways:

Communication

The universe of verbal and non-verbal exchanges, where languages act as interstellar keys. Mastering language systems opens an astral gateway to effective communication, conveying our ideas, needs, and

expectations as a cosmic guideline, eliminating any misunderstandings, and laying the foundations for an international professional relationship.

Culture and respect

It is an intergalactic dance, where languages intertwine like astrological constellations with diverse cultures. Speaking the language of foreign business partners radiates an aura of respect for their unique culture and demonstrates a willingness to adapt to their intergalactic way of doing business. This creates interstellar convergences and opens doors to an international symbiosis of cooperation and partnerships.

Business opportunities

An immense cosmic expanse where adaptability and language proficiency serve as interstellar fuel, exponentially expanding our reach and possibilities. This grants us the astrological freedom to explore new markets with ease, navigate among diverse cosmic clients and suppliers, and engage in foreign transactions that transcend international boundaries.

Building trust

A phenomenon of interstellar attraction fostered by speaking the intergalactic language of our foreign partners. This engenders a magnetic sense of trust and connectedness, contributing to strengthening interstellar business relationships and gaining the trust of international clients in our commitment to their market and needs.

Problem-solving

Mastering multiple intergalactic languages greatly illuminates the foreign puzzle. This interstellar skill enhances our ability to communicate with all parties

involved and provides a cosmic highway to swift and effective solutions in complex foreign business situations.



Flexibility

This is the universal key to success in international business, as it brings us into contact with a rich diversity of foreign cultures, norms, values, and business practices. Our intergalactic adaptability allows us to thrive like celestial chameleons in diverse interstellar environments and increase our success in dynamic intergalactic arenas.

Negotiations

An interstellar whirlwind where language proficiency can offer cosmic advantages. Understanding the nuances of international conversations allows us to engage in interstellar negotiations like a master conductor, harmonizing terms and agreements like a celestial symphony.

All in all, adaptability and language proficiency are indispensable astral skills in international business.

They are the supernovas of communication, promote understanding of diverse interstellar cultures, and expand the possibilities to forge international business relationships. All of this can lead to meteoric growth and interstellar triumphs in foreign markets.

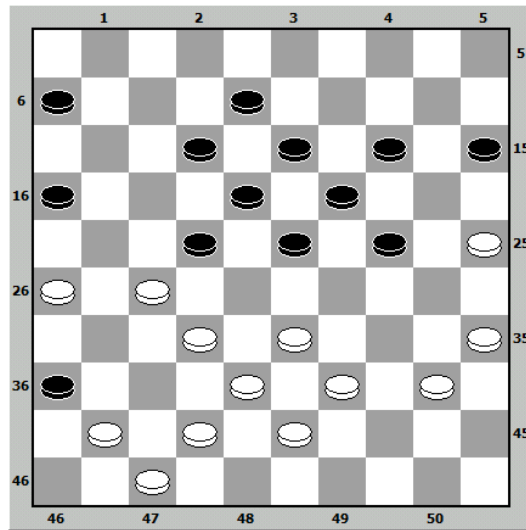
1.4 Alternatives

An alternative refers to another possibility or solution. It can also mean 'deviating' or 'different.' When something doesn't work, other options are often considered: an alternative.

In the game of checkers, we also talk about alternative possibilities. When Harm Wiersma won against Jannes van der Wal with 21-19 in 1983, 19 games had ended in a draw. The draw virus, which was more talked about than ever during matches, had a significant cause: the system of matches! At that time, it was hoped that the system of this match would hopefully be the last time. In his closing speech, FMJD President Jurg rightly pointed out that the many draws "are bad for checkers," and the global federation also wanted to explore alternatives. For a better method, one only needed to glance sideways at chess players, where the match system had already been challenged much earlier. Competitions where a pre-agreed number of wins were played - draws are therefore not considered - seemed to be the necessary salvation for these matches. This despite the significant organizational problems that this could bring about.

In the game of play, we often have various alternatives when it's our turn to continue the game. Many of these alternatives are bad, and some may be good. In the following position, it looks like Sijbrands is in a bad position and more or less forced to play 32-28. However, the International Grandmaster and magician on the checkerboard had already created all his alternatives in the position - as Baba Sy often did - and won with a brilliant capture.

Fred Ivens



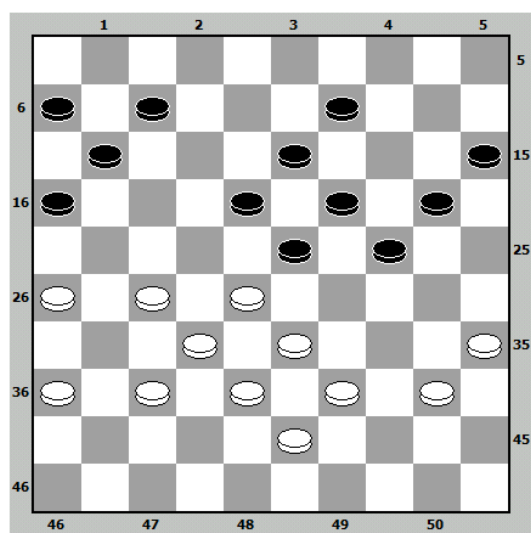
Ton Sijbrands

1. 26-21 22x31 2. 21-17 12x21 3. 42-37 31x42
 4. 32-28 23x32 5. 38x27 21x32 6. 47x27 36x47
 7. 39-34 47x29 8. 34x3

Traditionally, checkers is a splendidly balanced disc game with an extraordinarily beautiful and logical endgame. The king served only as a sort of reward and not to disturb the logic of the endgame. A king inspires and often leads to an early end of the game. The difficulties only begin when kings appear on both sides. They cannot effectively combat each other, so that almost every game ends in a mutual breakthrough and a drawn ending. It remains a strange fact that 4 kings are needed to control one. Many alternatives for other rules have been devised, but so far, nothing concrete has come of it.

Finally, a position of Baba Sy against Sieb Mensonides from 1962. When Mensonides continued with 40-34, Baba won as follows:

Baba Sy



Sieb Mensonides

1... 24-29 2.33x24 20x40 3.35x44 18-22
 4.27x29 16-21 5.26x17 11x31 6.36x27 19-23
 7.29x18 13x31

Three alternatives lose:

1.39-34 24-29 2.33x24 19x48 3. 28x8 48x22
 4. 8-3 22-31 5. 3x25 15-20 6.25x22 31x45

1.26-21 24-30 2.35x24 19x30 3.28x8 7-12
 4. 8x17 11x42 5.38x47 16x49

1.37-31 24-30 2.35x24 20x29 3.33x24 19x30
 4. 28x8 9-13 5. 8x19 18-22 6.27x18 30-34
 7.39x30 16-21 8.26x17 11x44

Two other alternatives would still have put up some resistance:

1.36-31 24-30 2.35x24 20x29 3.33x24 19x30
4. 28x8 9-13 5. 8x19 18-22 6.27x18 30-34
7.39x30 16-21 8.26x17 11x44 9.43-39 44x42
10.37x48

1.28-22



Baba Sy, 1962

The brilliant combination ability of the talented checkers player Baba Sy from Senegal can only be described as an enchanting symphony of tactical finesse and strategic brilliance. With the skill of a master conductor, he wove his moves into a harmonious and surprising melody that left his opponents in awe.

Baba Sy's ability to create combinations was like a cosmic dance of fiery and seemingly impossible moves, shooting across the checkerboard like meteors and delighting his opponents. His elegant and ingenious moves seemed to come from the depths of the cosmos, as if they were divine inspirations given only to a few.

1.4.1 Business

The cosmic labyrinth of alternatives in the pulsating universe of the business world transcends the boundaries of understanding, referring to a dazzling spectrum of countless options, possibilities, and choices that unfold like an expansive galaxy for the brave individual, the ambitious company, or the passionate organization as they are faced with the grand task of decision-making and tackling insurmountable challenges. In the bewildering context of the business world, these alternatives hold a monumental position as they forge the foundations for sweeping strategic planning, captivating risk management, and thunderous goal achievement.

As the fearless entrepreneurs or determined companies approach the crossroads of decision, they immerse themselves in a dazzling explosion of multiple possibilities and versatile trajectories that manifest themselves tumultuously and unbridled as intergalactic phenomena. A cosmic symphony of diversity emerges, where the length, complexity, and diversity of each sentence turn and sentence construction are expressed with unparalleled intensity, an incandescent and intoxicating outburst of expressiveness. In the maelstrom of cosmic possibilities, they subject themselves to captivating evaluation and sound reflection over a multitude of alternatives. These multilayered options display a splendid variation of costs, risks, timelines, and potential outcomes. A thoughtful analysis of this galactic array of possibilities bestows upon them the exquisite capacity to make considered, well-founded, and well-informed decisions amidst this cosmic spectacle.



Like a majestic rebirth of imagination in the wondrous universe of the business world, they enter

the cosmic paths of numerous contemplations as they embrace the inspiring mission to introduce a revolutionary new product to the vast market. As brilliant astronomers of commercial finesse, they consider with unrivaled elation an almost infinite number of alternatives. They cast their gaze upon the uncharted perspectives of different product versions, determining the cosmic stratification of price points, and losing themselves in the challenging choice of distinctive marketing strategies and countless other stunning considerations that shine as exoplanets in the cosmic firmament. In this galactic expedition, they inscribe the vivid saga of which choice will prove to be the most suitable to embody their heavenly ambitions and dreams."

1.5 Ambition

"Intelligence without ambition is like a bird without wings," proclaimed the eminent Spanish artist Salvador Dalí in the last century, and his prophetic words remain true to this day. It is undeniable that without ambition, all your acquired education, knowledge, and experiences lose their brilliance and languish in the darkness without zeal. Ambition is the crucial force that paves the path to excellence and makes a difference in the unparalleled spectacle of life.

Of course, self-awareness forms an indispensable foundation, for unrealistic ambitions and goals can inevitably lead to disappointments. Igniting your inner fire is valuable, but beware of extremes. Stay anchored in reality, and thereby increase the chances of achieving your goals while preserving motivation.

Every country has its own dynamics, but it remains true that in the Netherlands, the spotlight does not always shine on someone's achievements. Successful entrepreneurs are often viewed with suspicion. When someone rightfully takes pride in their achievements, it is accused of arrogance. Indeed, there are certain issues regarding success, hard work, and ambition. A top athlete will have to learn to ignore this mentality and steadfastly pursue their own course.

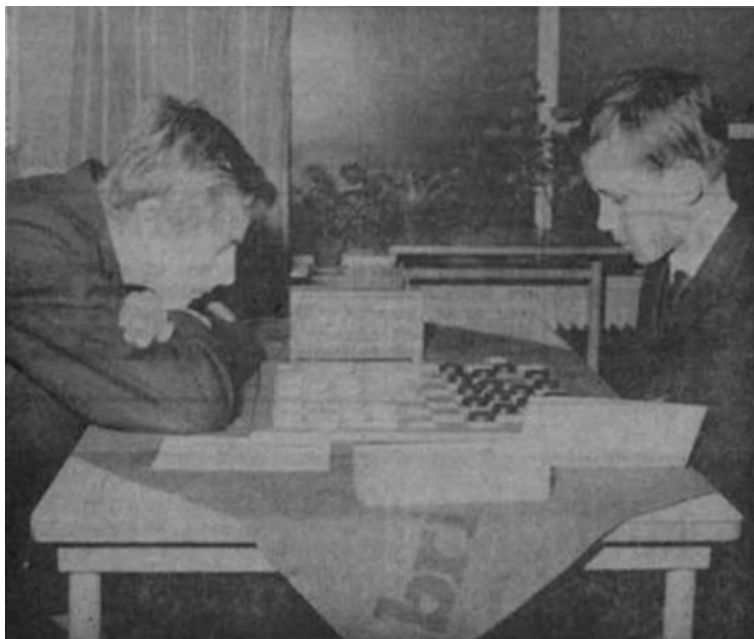
The world of top athletes and draughts players is marked by early dreams and boundless dedication to making those dreams come true. Training endlessly, delivering impeccable performances, and striving for the top. Anything that does not contribute to that goal is resolutely cast aside. In the scorching heat of

the battle, there is only one unmistakably clear goal: victory. High-level draughts players carry unmistakable traits. Along with physical fitness, there are qualities that immediately stand out: determination, passion, ambition, and discipline. A collection of attributes that serve as allies to achieve an important goal. To accomplish something, you must give everything, and that is right. Success does not come easily; it requires effort. Each time, pushing and surpassing the utmost limits of yourself, without neglecting the necessary rest and recovery.

Every ambitious draughts player cherishes a constant dream of someday representing their country at the international level and measuring themselves against recognized world grandmasters. But only a few are granted the grace to actually reach the top. Lionel Valois Smith was one of those ambitious draughts players, who constantly fought to turn his obsessive dream into reality. This dream dominated his thoughts before falling asleep and was the first thing he saw upon waking up. The result of his fearless dedication was that this humble draughts player represented Suriname at the World Draughts Championships in 1962.

Lack of ambition certainly wasn't what hindered Ton Sijbrands. When I asked him directly in January 1964 if he wanted to become world champion, he reluctantly admitted it. In September 1967, he was in top form and had ambitious plans for the future. He wanted to develop new draughts systems because, according to him, there was too little creativity in the game. Many expected him to win the world title in 1968, but fate decided otherwise. It would be several more years, but his ambition to win the title in 1972 was greater than ever. He had fully prepared himself for the World Championship that would take place at

that time. Driven by an insatiable hunger for success, he dove towards the title like a fearless hawk and left the Russians behind.



Govert Westerveld against Harm Wiersma, 1963

Harm Wiersma did not differ much from his predecessors. He convincingly defeated me at the age of just ten during the Brinta youth tournament in Hoogezand (Sappemeer) in 1963, in the same way Raichenbach had destroyed Herman de Jong's honor. At only 10 years old, Harm was already called a prodigy, and in 1976, he would also become world champion. Unlike Ton Sijbrands, Wiersma's ambition also brought him many benefits in other societal careers. He would become a busy businessman and even rise to an important political figure.

As for myself, I distanced myself from draughts at the age of 18, but the ambition and other important qualities of the game have always stayed with me and proven their usefulness in many areas: business, innovation, and research. That my choice was justified was shown by how Wiersma himself thought about draughts and his livelihood in those years.

In the late 1960s, Wiersma's draughts career soon began to take on a professional character. He said goodbye to student life and devoted all his time to playing draughts. He later realised that he had actually made the wrong choice then. He could have continued studying alongside draughts, but at the time he lacked the self-discipline to do so. That restriction to draughts had a price at the time. He realised that it had kept him mentally "poor".

Fortunately, insight came. Wiersma decided to make changes in his approach. He broadened his horizons, became interested in other things and actively devoted himself to those interests. This new, broader view of life enabled him to continue his personal growth.

Wiersma felt called to share his experience and wisdom with young people who harboured the dream of becoming professional draughts players. He strongly emphasised that the world of draughts is such a small community, where only a few can secure a place. Moreover, reaching the top, to which one must belong as a professional draughts player, is a challenge only for those with the right mindset and perseverance. He pointed out the remarkable contrast with the world of chess, where there are many more tournaments.

In light of this reality, Wiersma indicated that to succeed as a professional draughts player, one has to try to build one's livelihood in a different way. It takes a combination of talent, hard work, strategic thinking, and exploring alternative opportunities to establish oneself in this small but passionate world of checkers.

1.5.1 Business

The brilliant firmament of the business world is permeated by an inescapable force: ambition. This fiery and indomitable force serves as a sparkling companion for entrepreneurs and professionals, propelled by an unquenchable thirst to pursue goals, growth, and triumphs in their business endeavors. Let us explore the enchantment of ambition in all its resplendent glory and understand why it is such a crucial cornerstone in the majestic edifice of business triumph.

A Cosmic Vision:

Ambitious souls sketch a clear and sparkling goal for themselves with a steady hand, and they are determined to realize that vision with unwavering persistence. Every step they take, every decision they make, is imbued with a sacred mission to achieve their set goals. Their path is illuminated by the twinkling stars of discipline and focus.

A Dance of Innovation and Expansion:

Ambition acts as an unstoppable rocket that catapults new ideas to unknown heights. The boundaries of the known are shattered and replaced

by the bold secrets of the unexplored. Entrepreneurs continue to propel forward, elevating themselves and their businesses to new dimensions of creative solutions, a true symphony of innovation and growth.



Extraordinary Fortune of Perseverance:

The strength of ambition is unbreakable; it defies the trials of adversity and obstacles. In the face of challenges, ambitious souls do not succumb to the call of surrender; instead, they embrace determination and resilience. Their fire continues to burn, and their perseverance is like the tireless surging of the ocean.

A Leader in the Firmament:

Ambitious leadership acts as a magnet, attracting others to gather around a common vision and mission. Those whose hearts are imbued with ambition inspire and motivate the cosmic community to unite and collaborate for the realization of grand goals. Thus, glorious empires arise, enduring the test of time.

A Cosmic Key to Competitive Advantage:

In the dense mists of business rivalry, ambition is a shining beacon that propels its bearer forward. It enables them to take the lead, anticipate opportunities, and stand out among their peers in the universe of their industry. The insatiable hunger for progress guides them to uncharted and hidden treasures of success.

A Glistening Spiral of Self-Actualization:

Ambition is like a dynamic whirlwind that stimulates constant growth and personal development. The passionate hearts of ambitious minds yearn for continuous self-improvement and an ever-expanding horizon of skills and knowledge. Thus, they venture confidently into unknown territory, quenching their thirst with the clear water of self-enrichment.

But beware, in the brilliance of ambition also lies the seed of responsibility. Cosmic laws require ethical behavior, honesty, and respect for others. Unbridled and selfish ambition can have negative consequences in the dark corners of the universe and harm fellow travelers and the business ecosystem. Balanced and enlightened ambition is the true jewel that makes the business world shine and propels it to unknown heights of triumph and glory. Let the cosmic force of ambition unite us all in the dance of the business world and lead us to the lofty realms of immortal greatness.

1.6 Analyzing

During a game of checkers, one learns to thoroughly analyze, investigate, and assess a situation before making a decision. One improves in analysis, self-reflection.

For former world champion Harm Wiersma, checkers provided many advantages in his approach to work in the business world. In checkers, the business world is an appealing alternative. He said the following about checkers:

“Now I play more by routine. But I have benefited greatly from it. Not only through my contacts in Russia, but I have also learned to think analytically. I can distinguish the subtleties of the main lines very well. And now I benefit from that in the business field.”

After playing a game, analysis often takes place. Especially in a lost game, one does it to discover the errors in the moves and contemplate how the game could have been played better. In this way, one learns from their own mistakes and also learns to avoid those mistakes in the future.

Constantly searching for the best move on the checkers board likely means that one does the same in work or relationships. To be successful, it is necessary to strengthen entrepreneurial skills. Checkers adds value in strengthening entrepreneurial skills, such as analysis, creative thinking, risk assessment, concentration, and memory. All of these skills also play a role in the business world among employees.



**Time for analysis of the match
Harm Wiersma – Govert Westerveld**

The world's best checker player in terms of analysis is undoubtedly Ton Sijbrands. Sijbrands certainly spent 40 to 60 hours per week analyzing checker games. While others would prefer to have a beer or a cup of coffee after a difficult checker game, Sijbrands would take the checkerboard again to analyze the game deeply. Sometimes, he wasn't satisfied with the course of a drawn game and would spend two days analyzing it. Wiersma considered Jannes van der Wal, who would pull out a pocket checkerboard at any free moment to analyze, and Ton Sijbrands as checker automatons.

Thus, checkers represent strategic policy-making in its prime form! Furthermore, we have strategies and tactical maneuvers, searching for weaknesses in

opponents, seeking opportunities, forward planning and thinking, evaluating where things have failed or need adjustments, deploying troops at the right time and place, investing in a good future or allowing costs to precede benefits (as that's what happens with a sacrifice). But also, behavioral characteristics demanded by the business world such as entrepreneurship, ambition, initiative, problem analysis, decision-making, perseverance, flexibility

1.6.1 Business

In the majestic realm of business, analysis reveals itself as an indispensable source of epic depth and stunning cosmic complexity. Possessing the ability to unveil insightful knowledge and comprehensive understanding about various aspects of a company and the market bestows upon this intriguing force a central role in making informed decisions. From identifying brilliant opportunities to uncovering obscure threats, from fine-tuning business processes to conquering undisputed competitive advantage, analysis emerges as a titanic force of unparalleled value in the boundless universe of business success. Allow me to highlight some reasons why analysis forms an orchestral symphony of great importance in the arena of business:

Decision-making

Firmly grounded in its analytical nature, the power of analysis bestows managers and entrepreneurs with a treasure trove of valuable data and information, enabling them to unravel complex situations with keen insight supported by concrete evidence and

make informed choices. The splendid harvest of these thoughtful decisions weaves an elegant tapestry of strategic planning and execution.

Market insight

Through a masterful analysis of market data and dancing trends, analysis unveils profound insights into the desires, preferences, and capricious movements of customers. With this luminous wisdom, the company can harmonize its products and services with the melody of market demand and reap overwhelming competitive advantage.



Efficiency and optimization

In a display of ingenuity, analysis helps to identify and improve inefficiencies and restricting obstacles in business processes. By employing data analysis tools, organizations can embrace abundant optimizations and achieve a magical alchemy of increased productivity and profitability.

Risk management

As a helmsman on a cosmic journey, analysis navigates shrewdly to the heart of potential threats and plays a leading role in their control. Armed with proactive measures, companies shield themselves from a cosmic shower of operational, financial, and market risks.

Competitive analysis

In a sublime dance with rivals, the analysis of their strategies and performance reveals a treasure trove of insights to surpass them and traverse the cosmic gap with eloquence. This allows companies to gain unique differentiation and strengthen their competitive position in the universe of competition.

Innovation

As an infinite source of inspiration, analysis serves as fuel for innovation. By analyzing data and observing the dazzling dance of trends, companies can forge new ideas, venture into new markets, and offer new products or services that harmoniously resonate with customers' dreams.

Customer satisfaction

Through an artistic lens of analysis, the voices of customers are heard and analyzed clearly, leading the symphony of improvements for products and services to a captivating crescendo. A glorious brilliance of customer satisfaction and unwavering loyalty unfolds majestically.

In summary, the irresistible importance of analysis in business is characterized by its astonishing transmutation of data into invaluable insights and valuable information. Armed with analytical skills, companies are clad in the armor of enhanced performance, an edge over the competition, and the

mastery to adapt to the ever-changing firmament of business environments.

1.7 Attacks

In his book "Strategie der honderd velden" (Strategy of the Hundred Squares) published in 1967, J. F. Moser described strategy as an abstract concept that is difficult to grasp and is taught in military academies in the field of military science. Theoretical as it may be, it is only on the battlefield that a leader's true worth will be revealed. The critical moment of various movements such as flanking maneuvers, retreats, attacks, waiting, etc., will make all the difference. The opposing party is also well-trained, and the commander who best understands the intentions and capabilities of the other has the greatest chance of success. The sixth sense will be decisive in this context. This abstraction of strategy, which is equally applicable in the game of checkers, is therefore an innate talent that cannot be learned.

The attacking game can lead to great surprises, as world champion Iser Koeperman experienced in his match against Barend Dukel during the 1960 World Championship. Dukel's sensational attack caused significant difficulties for Koeperman. Dukel had the opportunity to execute a winning combination on two occasions, but he did not see it. Consequently, Koeperman completely lost his composure by failing to force a victory. On the 55th move, the world champion overlooked that he should have captured more pieces. Dukel did not notice this and only captured one piece, prompting Koeperman to immediately respond with a counter-move that secured him the win. Here, it was not the attack that triumphed, but rather Koeperman's endurance and nerves of steel.



**On the far left, Iser Kuperman.
1960 World Championships**

And what can be said about the former world champion Piet Roozenburg and his renowned attacking style? I was a personal witness to how he effortlessly dominated his opponents. In the opening round of the Dutch Championship, he completely overwhelmed Johan Lere with a masterful attack across the entire board, leaving Lere without a chance. On Saturday, April 6, 1963, I saw Piet Roozenburg sitting at his board, mentally preparing himself for the upcoming match, a full 20 minutes before the game began. His attacking game against Freek Gordijn became widely known and was of high quality. Gordijn experienced firsthand that his defensive skills were insufficient to withstand the attacking drive of Roozenburg.

When Harm Wiersma participated in the Suikertoernooi (Sugar Tournament) in 1970, it became clear that his playing style was based on

attacks. However, this did not always lead to the desired results:

Harm Wiersma had little luck up until now. Weaker players than Van der Sluis and Baba Sy would have succumbed to his onslaught, but they were clever enough to curb Wiersma's unrestrained attacking drive.

The first game for the world draughts title between the titleholder Anatoli Gantwarg and challenger Harm Wiersma resulted in a heroic and later historic draw after an intense duel. There was even concern that Wiersma would once again use too much thinking time, but he had used that time to intensify the tensions even further. The Russian player was taken aback by Wiersma's unstoppable attacking drive and had to play with utmost precision after Wiersma's very surprising combination on moves 38 and 39 to prevent a decisive disadvantage.

Jannes van der Wal was known as an avid mind sports enthusiast and sometimes considered chess or bridge to be more important than draughts. The Dutch champion of 1987 always wanted to win, and the audience thoroughly enjoyed it when he set aside all possibilities for a draw in the final round, getting into trouble, and eventually accepting a draw against Hein Meijer after 6 hours of play. Due to his attacking drive, Jannes encountered difficulties in several games, but with artful maneuvering, supplemented by a dose of luck, the adventurous small grandmaster always brought the positions back on track. He was a true promoter of the game of draughts.

1.7.1 Business

In the business world, the property of 'attacks' can also manifest itself, but it is often used metaphorically. In this context, 'attacks' refer to a dynamic and determined approach to achieving goals, surpassing competitors, or unraveling issues. Within this framework, 'attacks' can encompass various interpretations:



Competition: In the complex business world, where competition is rife, we discover the fascinating need for 'attacks' to gain an edge over rival companies. This bold approach includes a spectrum of possibilities, ranging from intensive marketing strategies to the birth of innovative products and even lowering prices in an epic showdown with competing enterprises.

Problem-solving: When challenges arise within a company, an active approach may be required to 'attack' them. This means the company takes

proactive measures to tackle the problems and improve the situation.

Achieving Goals: To be successful, companies must 'attack' their goals. Immersed in this world of goal-oriented entrepreneurship, we are overwhelmed by the unleashed forces when strategies are developed and put into practice, leading to intended triumphs.

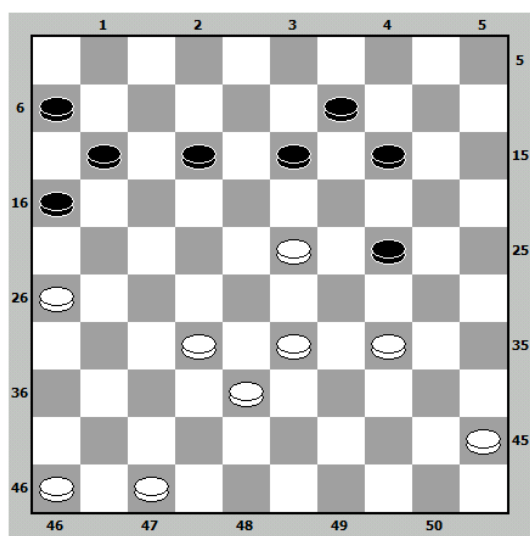
It should be noted that 'attacks' in the business world do not inherently carry a negative connotation. Rather, it is a source of inspiration and dynamism, driven by a passion for progress, success, and overcoming obstacles, while also charting an ethical course that ensures the foundations of a healthy corporate culture.

1.8 Attention

Attention is the cognitive process of focused perception of the environment. Attention is sometimes also understood as the allocation of processing capacity. It is related to concepts such as vigilance, concentration, and selective processing of information.

Piet Roozenburg and Ir. Geert E. van Dijk ended the Dutch championship with 18 points each. A tie-break was needed to confirm the final result, which was ultimately won by Roozenburg with a score of 4-2. In the second game of the deciding match for the national draughts championship played in Hengelo, Dr. P. Roozenburg achieved a splendid victory. Ir. G. E. van Dijk (White) opened with 33–28 and tried to keep the game as much as possible on the paths paved by the theory of the Dutch Opening. However, Roozenburg ignored all book wisdom and advanced with 17–22 and 11:22 with his short side. In the fourteenth move, he even involved his crown piece in the attack. It speaks to the insight of the former world champion that Van Dijk, undoubtedly a great technician, could not capitalize on that seemingly risky maneuver. However, Van Dijk needed too much attention for the incessant attacks on his long side. He could hold his ground for a long time, but when the Black center came into action and pressed like a wedge into the white game, his position worsened with each move. In the 47th move, Roozenburg forced a small combination, leaving a razor-sharp endgame that won in all variations. It was one of the most beautiful victories of recent times or, as the admirers of the former world champion put it, "Playing draughts at the highest level."

In the World Championship of 1992 in Toulon, Harm Wiersma, Aleksandr Baljakin, Rob Clerc, and Ton Sijbrands finished in second place with 31 points. That was 6 points less than the winner Alexei Tsizjov. A tournament between these 4 draught players was necessary to determine a winner who could then play a match against the world champion. Ton Sijbrands withdrew, leaving 3 players for the tournament that took place in Surhuisterveen (Friesland). Wiersma had a busy business life at that time, but there was little evidence of it in his game against Baljakin. Wiersma quickly managed to force a piece gain.



In this position, Baljakin played the logical move 12-17, but was then surprised by Wiersma's splendid counteroffer 37. 23-18, which had also escaped Baljakin's attention. After that, Wiersma quickly won.



**Full attention from Harm Wiersma
against Govert Westerveld**

1.8.1 Business

In the vast realm of the business world, "attention" reveals itself as an indispensable and brilliant facet, imbued with profound significance and dizzying complexity. It is an enigmatic force rooted in the essence of entrepreneurship, deftly interwoven into the fibers of success. Let us unveil the veil of this mystery and reveal the deeply penetrating importance of "attention" in this tapestry of business splendor, guided by the metric brilliance of perplexity and the pounding cadence of reventazón.

Customer Satisfaction

An inevitable spherical paradigm in the dynamic cosmos of commerce. When a company dedicates itself to nurturing the yearning desires, sacred wishes, and alluring melodies of its clientele, the alchemical transmutation of expectations into ecstatic fulfillment unfolds. Like a swirling supernova, satisfaction rises and reigns over a universe of repeat purchases and celestial echoes of verbal hymns.

Product Development and Innovation

Like a fearless researcher of cosmic order, the vigilant company scouts the pulsating heartbeat of the market and the melodies of the customer's mind. In the kaleidoscopic light show of consuming soul-stirrings, gems of insight sparkle, graceful dancers of uncharted paths. With a grand symphony of improvement, the firmament of existing products ascends to newer, unexplored heights of innovative brilliance.



Efficiency and Quality

In the treasury of details lies the encrypted secret of productive perfection. The ornamented lemniscate of attention envelops work with an embrace of focus, the musical harmony of efficient processes, and the euphonic jubilation of impeccable quality. And as cosmic dust particles of errors and defects are swept away, a jewel of unparalleled splendor emerges.

Employee Engagement

As cosmic gatekeepers, leaders stand ready to reveal their companions' inner truths. The velvety fabric of attention ignites burning passion and opens the portals of the mind, where enthusiasm and engagement dance in an enchanting cadence. A symphony of labor joy spreads across the celestial arc and quells storms of employee turnover.

Competitive Advantage

Like intrepid astronomers, visionary companies scan the firmament of market trends and spy the meteors of emerging competitors. The telescope of attention focuses sharply on the fleeting nebulae of changing customer needs and deciphers cosmic patterns. With unwavering force, they adapt to the galactic dance of the universe, unleashing a fiery grace of competitive advantage that leaves their rivals far behind.

Reputation and Brand Image

The masterpiece of the business universe weaves an irresistible aura of refinement and benevolence. The charm of attention creates a network of sincerity and care that, like a polar star, guides towards an indescribable realm of trust and loyal following. A radiant brand image rises in the firmaments and attracts followers like comets on their cosmic journey.

Problem-Solving

As versatile cosmic alchemists, companies explore the vast cosmos of challenges and problems, the meteor showers of obstacles that obscure the path. The intense light of attention pierces the darkness, sheds clarity on mysteries, and illuminates the cosmic map of solutions. Like brave space travelers, they deftly navigate asteroid fields of difficulties, avoiding threatening impacts and sovereignly adapting to challenging tides.

In the wonderful kaleidoscope of the business world, "attention" is the ethereal fabric that directs the melodies of triumph and the symphonies of progress. It is an epic journey of celestial significance, imbued with the versatility of perplexity and the explosion of reventazón. For in the cosmic dance of business greatness lies the immortal power of "attention," as the creator of a glorious universe of opportunities and triumphs.

1.9 Cognitive skills

In articles about memory, learning, or issues related to them, you often come across the term 'cognitive.' For example, we talk about cognitive skills, cognitive abilities, or cognitive functions. The term cognition originates from the Latin word 'cognoscere,' which means to know or understand. Depending on the context, it can refer to knowledge, belief, thinking ability, the capacity to learn, remember, and exchange knowledge, and so on. In psychology, cognition refers to the ability to absorb and process knowledge, as well as aspects like perception, thinking, language, consciousness, memory, attention, and concentration. It's a comprehensive concept that hasn't fully integrated into the world of checkers.



Cognitive skills or abilities are related to how well you can absorb and process knowledge and information. Here are some examples:

Planning
Effective Work
Prioritization
Logical Thinking
Analytical Ability
Solution-Oriented
Creativity
Having and/or Using Self-Knowledge
Good Memory
Goal-Oriented
Evaluation
Intuition

With chess, alongside the development of cognitive skills, much like for affective and communicative individuals, thanks to imaginative play, they develop self-control and emotions despite frustration and triumph. They learn not to break the rules and to wait their turn. Thus, according to this comparison, multiple intelligences come into play on the board.

Nowadays, thinking work is often left to the computer, rendering the brain inactive. The brain needs to be more active, with more variety in its thinking processes. Checkers is a challenging but also a complex game that stimulates the building of your cognitive reserves. No checker player is ever fully learned because there are always new discoveries. Additionally, the social aspect has a tremendous influence on your cognitive reserves.

It's therefore pleasing to note that as of March 10, 2020, there's a chess and checkers table on Wilhelminaplein in Naaldwijk (in front of the Old Church). The table is meant as a meeting place in the Netherlands. Chess and checkers are universal languages that encourage interactions between, for

instance, labor migrants and native Westlanders. It contributes to the optimal development of the youth. Numerous international studies show that chess and checkers explicitly stimulate the development of young people in many areas. It's incredibly enjoyable and beneficial for cognitive ability; it directly contributes to better learning, aids critical thinking, problem-solving, and independent decision-making. Through play, one learns to look ahead, make plans, take calculated risks, and avoid old mistakes. These mind sports also keep seniors more vital. It's logical that the national initiative for chess tables (see 'background') is supported by the Royal Dutch Chess Federation (KNSB) and scientists like Prof. Erik Scherder and Prof. Dick Swaab. Of course, it also promotes the chess community in Westland.



Garden Chess Game at 's-Gravenzande

Individuals with Dementia:

Board games like chess, checkers, and backgammon are strategic games that enhance cognitive skills. It can also be a enjoyable activity with family and friends. Playing games with people with dementia isn't just a fun activity; it also helps improve the person's quality of life and cognitive function.

Intuition:

A professor at the university once told me that I had a very good intuition regarding history. I believe I owe that to the game of checkers. This seems accurate, as it's now evident that chess players (and, by extension, checkers players) are more introverted, intimate, and intuitive than the non-player population. This was demonstrated by researchers who analyzed a sample of 270 average players and 209 masters, concluding that chess players had significantly higher scores in introversion, intuition, and thinking compared to the general population norms."

1.9.1 Business

Cognitive skills play a crucial role in the business world, encompassing various aspects of thinking, understanding, problem-solving, and communication. Here's a deeper look at the role of these skills in the business context:

Planning: A robust plan serves as the guiding principle for an organization to set direction and achieve goals. This involves strategies, resource allocation, and setting measurable milestones. Thanks to the game of checkers, we learn to look ahead and plan our moves. Similarly, in the business world, planning is essential and is, in fact, an art. We must anticipate and prepare for potential future changes. Additionally, we need to be able to intervene promptly in the face of sudden changes.

Efficient Work:

Efficiency is key. The ability to work purposefully and effectively with time and resources is essential. It's about focusing on tasks that contribute to goal achievement without getting distracted by irrelevant matters. This promotes productivity and maximizes results.

Setting Priorities:

In a demanding business environment, setting priorities is crucial. This means identifying the most important tasks, goals, or projects and tackling them first. Effective prioritization prevents overload and helps focus on what's most valuable.

Logical Thinking:

This skill involves understanding cause-and-effect relationships and drawing reasonable conclusions based on available information. Logical thinking is crucial for problem-solving and making thoughtful decisions.

Analytical Ability:

Analytical ability goes a step further than logical thinking. It involves thoroughly examining complex information, identifying relevant details, and distinguishing main points from side issues. Analytical ability is crucial for evaluating business data, market trends, and company performance.

Solution-Oriented:

Solution orientation is the fuel for progress. It's the ability to turn problems into opportunities, to see a path to improvement in every obstacle. Possessing this skill enables creative thinking and finding solutions through innovation for the challenges we encounter daily in our business.

Creativity:

Creativity is the spark that illuminates the business world. It's not just a tool; it's the engine of innovation. It drives the development of new ideas, the unlocking of innovative products, and the creation of services that challenge the status quo. Creative minds dare to venture beyond the beaten path. They break the boundaries of the familiar and explore uncharted territories. They see not only what is but also what could be. Their ability to conceive original concepts is like a breath of fresh air in a world of predictability.



Self-Knowledge:

Self-knowledge is essential for personal and professional growth. It encompasses understanding your strengths and weaknesses, values, and motivations. Self-awareness enables individuals to collaborate more effectively, set goals aligned with their abilities, and promote personal development.

Good Memory:

A good memory for crucial information, customer preferences, business facts, and relevant data is valuable in the business world. It enables individuals to quickly recall information, make decisions based on factual knowledge, and act consistently.

Goal-Oriented:

Goal-orientation means determination and persistence in pursuing objectives. It goes hand in hand with setting clear goals, developing a strategy to achieve them, and overcoming obstacles along the way.

Evaluation:

The ability to evaluate objectively is essential for continuous improvement. It involves critically assessing performance, results, and processes to identify what works and what can be improved. Strong evaluation skills help make decisions to optimize business operations.

Intuition:

While intuition may appear less measurable, it has a significant impact. The ability to make rapid decisions based on implicit knowledge, experience, and unconscious understanding of situations. This can be helpful in quick decision-making in uncertain circumstances and identifying opportunities that are not immediately measurable.

Developing and balancing these cognitive skills contributes to effective leadership, personal growth, and business success. They enable individuals to understand complex situations, make decisions, and add value to their organizations. Continuously honing these skills contributes to professional excellence and enduring relevance in a rapidly

changing business world. In the fast-paced realm of business, these skills are as precious as gold. They are the key to success, the building blocks of growth, and the fuel for progress. It's not only important to possess them but also to nurture and cherish them.

1.10 Combining

The ability to combine is the search for the interconnectedness of things (combination). J. W. Van Dartelen had the following to say about it:

"We personally believe that both chess and checkers require the same amount of cleverness and intellect, and certain attributes such as concentration, combination, and imagination are equally developed by both games."



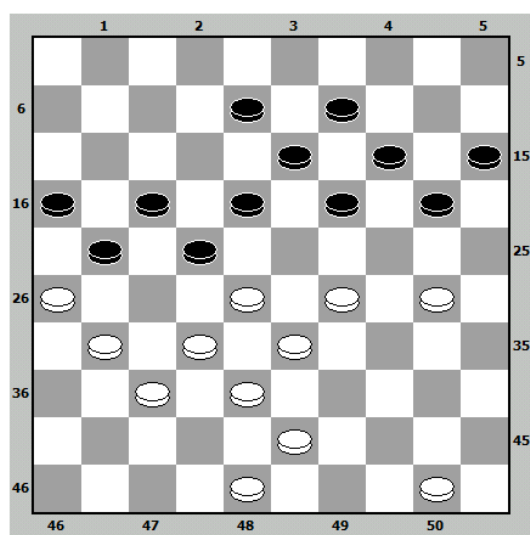
J. W.van Dartelen

Checkers is one of the most beautiful games. Subtle construction of positions; forming patterns; creating combinations, where one move fits into another like the gears of a clock meticulously interlocking; executing capturing moves, many moves deep,

sparkling with ingenuity and revealing hidden intricacies that were not suspected; the finesse of the endgame that transports with its beauty!

But those who know something about checkers understand the richness of that game; those who have witnessed the wonder-filled combinations; those who have spent hours in serious study to find a way out of the labyrinth of moves and variations have come to recognize that checkers is more than just sliding.

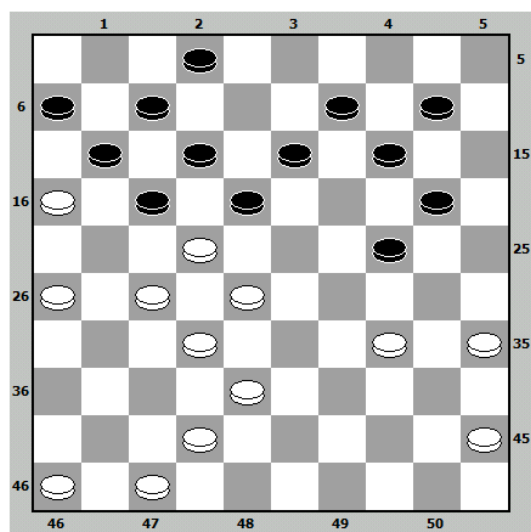
Nothing better than to give an example. In the following position, black threatens to win a piece with 20-24, and on 30-25, there's also 20-24 with various threats. Fortunately, white had woven a crafty combination into their position, namely, first sacrificing a piece, then a forcing move, and finally a beautiful capturing move to conclude the game with a win.



Solution:

1. 30-24 19x30 2. 28-23 8-12 3. 33-28 22x42
 4. 43-38 42x24 5. 31-27 18x29 6. 27-22 17x28
 7. 26x10 15x4 8. 32x3

The composite problem that follows was created by Martin van Dijk. The solution requires a total of 22 moves deep. It begins again with a piece sacrifice, then a forcing move, and finally, white continues with a devastating capturing move. Black still thinks they can achieve a draw with a piece disadvantage, but white had considered everything. The endgame, however, is just as beautiful as the beginning of the combination.



Solution:

01.26-21 17x26 2.34-30 14-19 3.27-21 18x27
04.45-40 26x17 5.32x21 17x26 6.28-23 19x28
07.30x17 11x22 8.38-33 28x39 9.40-34 39x30
10.35x13 2-8 11.13x11 6x17 12.46-41 22-28
13.41-36 28-33 14.42-38 33x42 15.47x38 17-22
16.16-11 22-27 17. 11-7 26-31 18. 7-2 31-37
19.36-31 27x36 20. 2-19 36-41 21.38-32 37x28
22.19x46



Iser Koepman tegen Harm Wiersma

Combine:

"Combine" can have an unpleasant connotation when it comes to bribery and illegal deals in the world of checkers. Combating combinations is a fundamental part of the regulations to ensure this. For these reasons, fellow countrymen must play against each other immediately in a major

tournament to completely eliminate possible combinations. Combinations cannot be proven, but that they occur is certain. In 1976, Ton Sijbrands accused the checkers players Wiersma and Koepman of combining. Koepman was alleged to have intentionally lost his game against Wiersma. Vigorous denials from Wiersma followed.

These accusations were supported by statements from the Russians Gantwarg and Tsjegolev. Wiersma attempted to refute all this, first in a press conference, later in a confidential conversation with Sijbrands. Finally, the case went anonymously into the cover-up.

Three years earlier, another incident had already taken place. Had Andreiko, on the opening day of the world checkers championship match, tried to buy some unpublished variations from Sijbrands through Wiersma, or had Wiersma offered Andreiko a substantial amount of money for opening variations of Sijbrands? The whole matter was reduced in limited circles by Andreiko and Wiersma to a misunderstanding.

In 1994, we see that the enraged Rob Clerc considered other accusations from Sijbrands as pure slander. According to Sijbrands, Clerc had repeatedly deliberately lost games in the past to harm Sijbrands. It was the year in which Sijbrands announced that he accused Harm Wiersma of buying games, Alexandr Baljakin of selling games, and Rob Clerc of giving away games.

From this, it follows again that checkers is not only a mentally demanding activity, but also places high mental demands on the players, especially at the professional level. Players must be able to control

emotions such as frustration, disappointment, or overconfidence, so that these emotions do not negatively influence their decision-making. During the Dutch youth championship in 1963, I also heard that my rival Henk Kemperman offered money to my opponents to defeat me. Such matters are difficult to prove and to prevent everywhere, especially against players who have a business-oriented disposition.

1.10.1 Business

The search for the interconnectedness of different elements in the business world, also known as "combining," is of great importance for the success of a company. Here are some important aspects of combining elements in the business world:

Synergy:

Striving for synergy is a core principle in combining. This is the power of collaboration. When different elements such as teams, departments, or business activities are combined, they can achieve more together than individually. By pooling resources and integrating them effectively, a company can operate more efficiently and achieve better results.

Diversification:

This is about variation. By combining diverse products, services, or markets, you can spread risks. If one market shows disappointing results, another product or market may perform well. Diversification also opens the door to new opportunities and helps attract different types of customers.

Innovation:

This involves mixing new ideas and technologies. The combination serves as a stimulating factor for innovation. Stemming from knowledge of previous successes and failures, companies can sow the seeds of new ideas and perfect existing processes.



Partnerships: Collaborating with other companies can be valuable in combining resources, expertise, and customer bases. Joint ventures, alliances, or strategic partnerships can strengthen a company's market position and provide access to new resources.

Managing Time and Resources: The combination of activities and resources must also be managed efficiently. Optimizing processes, delegating responsibilities, and prioritizing projects are essential to effectively combine without overburdening the company.

Market Insight:

Understanding what the market needs is essential. A successful combination involves aligning products and services with the desires of your customers. This not only allows effective combining but also maintains a competitive advantage.

Flexibility:

Combination strategy allows adaptation to changing circumstances and enables quick responses to unexpected challenges. It discovers alternative solutions when traditional plans fail.

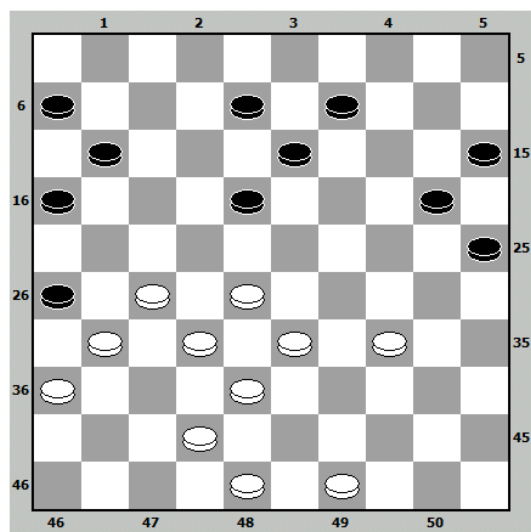
The business world is about smart and strategic combination of different elements. Whether it's teams, products, technologies, or market knowledge, the ability to find the right mix and adapt to changes is invaluable for success. It requires a holistic view of the organization and the market, as well as the ability to plan strategically and implement effectively. A good understanding of the dynamics of combining can help a company grow and succeed in an ever-changing business world.

1.11 Comprehension

Comprehension revolves around understanding, absorbing, and processing information, ideas, concepts, and emotions. It's about how well someone can grasp new information, merge existing knowledge, and capture complex thoughts. With a strong comprehension, one quickly learns new concepts, makes connections between sources of information, and develops profound insights. It's a crucial cognitive skill that determines how rapidly one acquires new skills, approaches problems, thinks critically, and adapts to changes. It can be strengthened by actively engaging in learning, processing information regularly, and being open to new ideas and perspectives.

A grandmaster in checkers often plays in a way that far surpasses the comprehension of an ordinary mortal. Not everyone is capable of understanding their moves. This only comes to fruition after thorough study of this mind sport. A checkers player must possess a great comprehension in order to absorb the various positions of a complicated game sequence in order to continue it well. With wise tactics, they must proceed, not sacrificing solidity for brilliance. The comprehension is heavily tested with the following three positions.

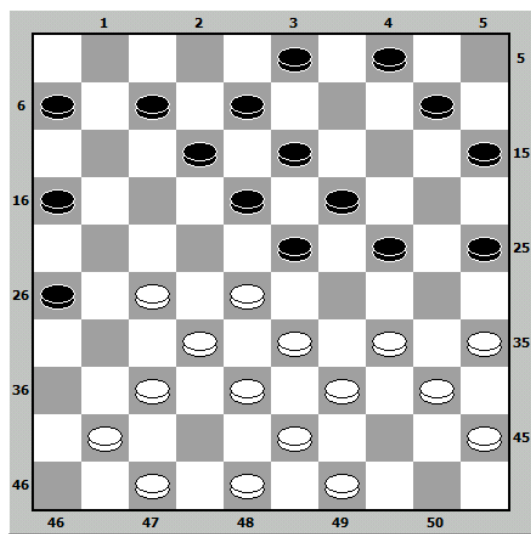
Since every comprehension has its limits, the practice is that after a few minutes of fruitless searching, one begins to "try," meaning touching the pieces. Even with this relatively simple capturing combination, many won't be able to do without trying!



Solution:

1. 34-30 25x34 2. 33-29 34x23 3. 28x19 26x28
 4. 38-32 28x37 5. 42x31 13x24 6. 27-21 16x27
 7. 31x2

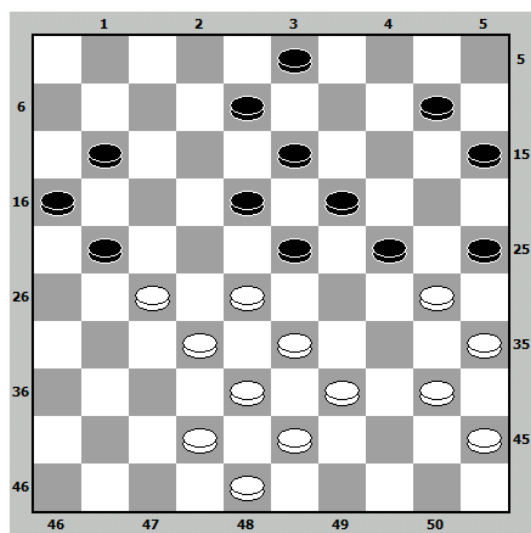
The following position will also only be completely understood by a few; it remains somewhat hazy for many. Since some variations cloud the overall picture.



Solution:

1. 27-22 18x27 2. 32x21 26x17 3. 34-30 23x32
 4. 37x28 25x34 5. 40x20 15x24 6. 28-23 19x28
 7. 33x2 13-19 8. 2x13 19x8

Next, we have another beautiful forcing combination, but how few see it "just like that."



Solution:

1. 27-22 25x34 2. 40x20 15x24 3. 22-17 21x12
 4. 28-22 18x27 5. 32x21 16x27 6. 33-29 24x44
 7. 43-39 44x33 8. 38x16

Those who manage to find the solutions to these three positions without moving the pieces unquestionably possess great talent and comprehension.

Mathematics and checkers:

In the 1970s, Ljubov Trawina chose checkers because it appealed to her. "It's an intelligence game, and it's within my comprehension. Additionally, the international game, compared to the Russian board, offers so many more interesting and strategic possibilities that you can spend hours with it." That's Trawina.



Ljubov Trawina

Three to four times a week, the checkers-playing talent, studying mathematics at the University of Vilnius, spends 4 hours studying the games of Gantwarg, Kuperman, and Andreiko. The time not dedicated to studying checkers or mathematics is

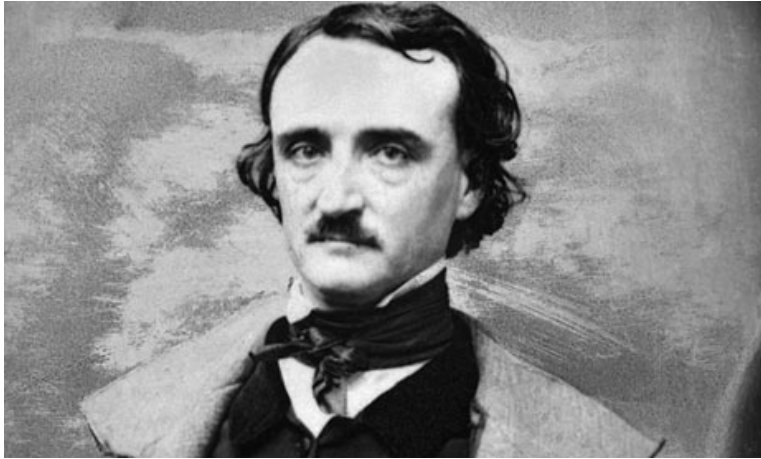
used to improve her physical condition. "Because good physical condition is also needed for checkers," says Trawina. "Checkers is just as popular at our university as it is in the Netherlands, and numerous tournaments are organized.

In 1975, Trawina, as a female checkers player, won the first official female championship of the Soviet Union and finished in second place in the women's world championship.

Edgar Allan Poe:

If there's a name in world literature that has maintained its enchantment through the ages, it's undoubtedly that of the American writer EDGAR ALLAN POE. Not only due to the enormous influence he exerted on European literature does Poe remain one of us, but even more so because the readability of his stories, poems, and essays has hardly diminished over the past hundred years. See what he wrote about the GAME OF CHECKERS:

The faculty of resolution is possibly much invigorated by mathematical study, and especially by that highest branch of it which, unjustly, and merely on account of its retrograde operations, has been called, as if *par excellence*, analysis. Yet to calculate is not in itself to analyse. A chess player, for example, does the one without effort at the other. It follows that the game of chess, in its effects upon mental character, is greatly misunderstood. I am not now writing a treatise, but simply prefacing a somewhat peculiar narrative by observations very much at random; I will, therefore, take occasion to assert that the higher powers of the reflective intellect are more decidedly and more usefully tasked by the unostentatious game of draughts than by all the elaborate frivolity of chess.



Edgar Allen Poe

In this latter, where the pieces have different and *bizarre* motions, with various and variable values, what is only complex is mistaken (a not unusual error) for what is profound. The *attention* is here called powerfully into play. If it flag for an instant, an oversight is committed, resulting in injury or defeat. The possible moves being not only manifold but involute, the chances of such oversights are multiplied; and in nine cases out of ten it is the more concentrative rather than the more acute player who conquers. In draughts, on the contrary, where the moves are *unique* and have but little variation, the probabilities of inadvertence are diminished, and the mere attention being left comparatively unemployed, what advantages are obtained by either party are obtained by superior *acumen*. To be less abstract — Let us suppose a game of draughts where the pieces are reduced to four kings, and where, of course, no oversight is to be expected. It is obvious that here the victory can be decided (the players being at all equal) only by some *recherché* movement, the result of some strong exertion of the intellect. Deprived of ordinary resources, the analyst throws himself into the spirit of his opponent, identifies himself therewith, and not unfrequently sees thus, at a glance, the sole methods (sometimes indeed absurdly simple ones) by which he may seduce into error or hurry into miscalculation.

Pierre Manoury

This French checkers player Manoury (1727-1805) made a statement that applies to the tactical aspect of the game:



Pierre Manoury

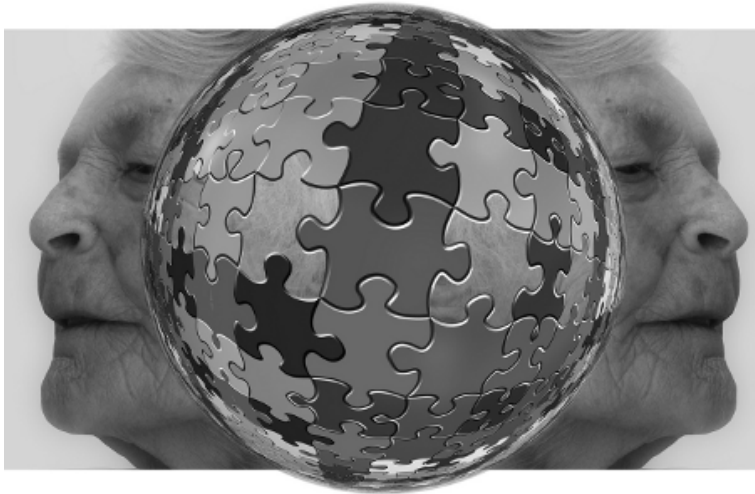
"The strong player must possess several good, not everyday qualities. Logical thinking to make sound judgments and the ability to think quickly. A great comprehension to absorb the various positions of a complicated game sequence. With wise tactics, he must proceed, not sacrificing solidity for brilliance. Above all, he must possess clarity and precision in his imagination to eliminate confusion. When the player combines, he must no longer see the piece that is removed according to his calculation, and conversely, he must see a piece or king where it is supposed to land according to his calculation. He must give, capture, move, and replace without touching the pieces involved in his operation, and perform these operations in imagination as flawlessly as he will do it immediately in reality!"

1.11.1 Business

Checkers players can have various advantages in the business world due to the skills and qualities they develop during checkers play. Some of these benefits are:

Strategic Thinking:

Checkers requires in-depth strategic thinking and planning. Checkers players develop the ability to devise long-term strategies, which is also useful for making business decisions and planning business goals.



Analytical Thinking:

The game requires a thorough analysis of possible moves and consequences. Checkers players develop analytical skills that are useful for examining business data, trends, and market conditions.

Decision-Making Under Pressure:

In checkers, players often need to make decisions under time pressure. This trains checkers players to make quick and effective decisions, which is valuable in the dynamic business world.

Risk Management:

Checkers revolves around minimizing losses and maximizing gains. This mindset aligns with risk management principles in business, where avoiding unnecessary risks and striving for positive results are important.

Concentration and Focus:

During checkers play, players must remain attentive to avoid mistakes. These concentration skills are valuable when dealing with complex business tasks and projects.

Persistence: Checkers can be challenging and requires persistence to keep learning and growing. This trait is crucial in business, where obstacles and setbacks are common.

Emotional Control:

Checkers players learn to control emotions, as emotional reactions can impact performance. This is relevant in business, where handling stress and emotions is important in negotiations and collaboration.

Competitive Spirit:

Checkers is inherently competitive. Players cultivate a healthy competitive mentality and learn to handle rivalry without losing sight of their goals.

The skills and mindset that checkers players develop can ultimately help them make improved decisions,

communicate more efficiently, think more strategically, and ultimately succeed in the business world.

Indeed, checkers undoubtedly possesses a multitude of qualities that can be of great service in the struggle for survival. The experiences and lessons gained from checkers form, so to speak, a school for life. In a checkers game, active intervention is constantly required, and after each move, the question naturally arises: "What now?" Then, correct and purposeful action must be taken, as any hesitation can be fatal! The tragedy of life lies in the unforeseen, the unforeseeable, and the sudden, just like in a checkers game."

1.12 Concentration Power

Much research has also been conducted on the benefits of chess for the brain in children. These studies show that children who play chess perform better in school when it comes to skills such as logical thinking, problem-solving, mathematical ability, spatial awareness, and concentration. Both draughts (checkers) and chess require an equal amount of intellectual effort, and certain attributes like concentration, combinatory ability, and imagination are equally developed by both games. In draughts, players learn to focus completely on the game. This is absolutely necessary to successfully complete the game. If you allow yourself to be distracted by something, errors can occur on the board. Marcel Bonnard faced this during the 1928 World Championship, and it was said about him:

"Marcel Bonnard is known as the greatest theoretician in France, and his extensive tournament experience gave him every chance for a top placement. However, he had to settle for sharing fourth place. We attribute this to the fact that he was the most absent-minded player in the entire tournament! We have seen him play games that not even a grandmaster could improve, but we also saw him make blunders that a third-class player could not equal."

It is not always possible to fully concentrate on a tournament. This happened to W.C.J. Polman during the 1928 World Championship. Probably, this was the reason he ended up at the bottom in this tournament. It was said about him at that time:

"W.C.J. Polman was the tail-ender in this tournament, but we certainly do not consider him the least. Outsiders will naturally measure the strength of the participant by the number of points scored, but we knew that other factors contributed to Polman's

lesser success. When the competition was only a few days old, Polman's wife fell ill, and this had a negative impact on his play. If, in addition to the great physical effort of playing such tough games, you also have concerns about domestic circumstances, you must be made of steel to be able to fully concentrate on the board. The fact that he continued to play until the end of the tournament must have cost him more physical effort than playing the games themselves. Yet, despite this disadvantage, we saw him play many beautiful games, and remarkably, he usually failed in the endgame!"

Sports psychiatrist Ferdi Oyen also has his opinion on concentration, as the opponent can influence the player, either unconsciously or intentionally:

"Of course, that's true, but the opponent's behavior always has an impact. Sometimes positive, sometimes negative. Concentration techniques can help you minimize that influence, so you can continue to play your own game. It is indeed of great importance that you can achieve such a high level of concentration during a game that you can focus solely on the game and keep all other influences out."

Hendriks and Clerc, a cyclocross rider and a draughts player. Two different sports, but both practitioners have one thing in common: they regularly listen to a cassette tape with the voice of Ferdi Oyen. Not because that man has such a beautiful voice, but because they attach great value to Oyen's advice. In this regard, Clerc told us:

"Oyen means a lot to me mentally. Thanks to him, my concentration during a game has improved tremendously."

Ton Sijbrands prepared for the 1968 World Draughts Championship in Bolzano while staying with his girlfriend Catherine Ozil, bringing his draughts books along. Father Wiersma said the following:

"I see that girl of Ton's as a hindrance. She sits almost on his lap during matches, and that costs him - at his age - concentration."

Harm hasn't had to deal with such problems yet. His biggest problem really has everything to do with concentration."

That was in the early years of Harm Wiersma because in 1968, he stated that he couldn't stand it when someone whispered near him. A year later, this had improved considerably for him, as during the Sugar Tournament at the end of 1969, he ignored Andris Andreiko's tricks. The impulsive Russian began to move stones with wild gestures and press the time clock. A rather common reaction of the Russian, which, however, did not disturb Wiersma at all. Where Andreiko's antics distracted other draughts players, Wiersma proved to be completely unaffected by this piece of Russian temperament. In fact, he and Ton Sijbrands secured the first place in this tournament, ahead of the Russians!

Perhaps Aleksej Tsjizjov can give us an example. He was a ten-time world champion, and when he played a match against Harm Wiersma in 1993/1994, he said the following about concentration:

"No one can disturb me. I can still concentrate. Once the game has started, I shut myself off from everything... Oh, it doesn't matter to me where we play. I can even play draughts in a discotheque."

An even stronger example of concentration can be found in 1910 in the game between the Dutch champion Jack de Haas and the Senegalese draughts player Woldouby in Paris, who defeated everyone. But first, a little more about the famous Woldouby.



Woldouby with glasses on

It was the French player Barteling who discovered Woldouby in a tent at the "l'Afrique mystérieuse" exhibition in the Jardin zoologique d'Acclimatation du Bois de Boulogne (Paris). The small tent was called "Damier". This aroused Barteling's curiosity, and upon entering, he saw a Senegalese man with a double chin, dressed in his kaftan robe, ready to play a game with anyone and bet some francs. A notable detail is that the Senegalese draughts player Woldouby hardly wasted any time during a game. As a general rule, he fell asleep while his opponents thought. When the opponent finally made a move, he touched Woldouby to wake him up. Once awake, Woldouby briefly looked at the board, then quickly made his move, and immediately fell asleep again. A draughts miracle!



Philip Battefeld and Jack de Haas, 1901

Now, a little more about Jack de Haas, whom we see here in a photo and whose posture during the draughts game is shown. Elbows on the table and head in his hands. In this position, he started playing against Woldouby one day, who had won most of his games against French players. Woldouby was a remarkable draughts player, a famous fast player, for whom De Haas's serious and thoughtful play was not suitable. These games were played under special circumstances. De Haas, with elbows on the table and head in his hands, fully immersed in the game, made his calculations. But Woldouby could not tolerate this for long; it went against his idea of playing based on intuition. He, too, placed his head in his hands and fell asleep, a calmness that betrays a clear conscience. However, a slight push was enough to quickly get a countermove and fully inform Woldouby about the situation in the tent. During the game, a cloudburst broke out over Paris, and after a

while, water seeped into the tent. Half-asleep, Woldouby pulled a crate towards him to rest his legs on. Only after the game did De Haas realize that he was standing in water up to his ankles! Surprised, he inquired about what had actually happened. No wonder this great pioneer of the draughts game in the Netherlands, with admirable concentration, always reminded the Dutch draughts players that they brought too many worries from their private lives to the board. "Leave your worries at home!" he would always say. This complete concentration of Jack de Haas was rewarded with a victory. De Haas used three hours of thinking time for this game... Woldouby only ten minutes...!"

1.12.1 Business

Working with concentration is something many aspire to. Strong concentration allows you to complete tasks more quickly and effectively and answer questions with precision. Draughts players are known for their remarkable ability to concentrate, effortlessly staying fully focused on a single draughts game for up to 4 hours. This trait presents a valuable advantage in the business world.

Now, let's explore the benefits of this concentration ability in the business context:

Targeted Efficiency:

Think of an intense draughts game where every move is crucial. A similar focused approach can significantly enhance efficiency in the business world. With complete focus and precision, you can

accomplish tasks, leading to superior results in the same timeframe.

Sharp Decision-Making:

Concentration empowers you to delve deeply and make sharp decisions. You can thoroughly analyze complex challenges, gather all relevant data, and make well-informed choices that positively impact your business.

Effective Problem Solving:

Draughts players are known for their ability to think strategically and solve problems. This skill is equally valuable in the business world. A concentrated mind can tackle intricate business challenges and devise innovative solutions that others might overlook.



Prolonged Attention Span:

The skill of maintaining focus over extended periods, as in playing a long draughts game, is essential in

tasks requiring patience and perseverance. In business, this can be valuable for projects demanding time and dedication.

Stress Management:

Strong concentration helps reduce distractions and directs your attention to the task at hand. This can lead to reduced stress, as you're less prone to being overwhelmed by external factors.

Effective Communication:

Similar to a draughts player keenly observing their opponent's moves, you can closely observe and listen to your business counterpart. This leads to improved communication and understanding, crucial for successful business relationships.

Goal Orientation:

The concentrated mindset of a draughts player aids in keeping goals clear and focusing your efforts on achieving them. This significantly enhances goal orientation in pursuing business objectives.

In essence, the benefits of draughts players' concentration ability can be translated into improved efficiency, better decision-making, problem solving, and communication, as well as more effective stress management and goal orientation. The ability to maintain focus for extended periods provides a competitive edge and can contribute to success in the business realm.

1.13 Confidence

Confidence arises from the knowledge and feeling of being seen and affirmed by others who care about you. A secure attachment forms the foundation for this. Self-confidence means trusting in yourself and knowing that others love you and are willing to help if needed. You are not alone in this journey; this feeling is deeply rooted, deep within your gut.

Regularly playing checkers contributes to improving self-confidence, which is crucial in the growth process of children. Checkers make you more self-assured, give you a sense of control, stimulate your autonomy, and strengthen your sense of self-worth.

Chess is a game where chance hardly plays a role, but thoughts collide as one thought tries to refute the opponent's thought. When someone makes a mistake - and it costs them the game - the errors, imperfections, and inaccuracies can be analyzed, and willpower and mental strength can be exercised for the next encounter. Knowing that you have studied the mistakes you made allows you to approach the next meeting with more confidence and self-esteem because it is likely that you won't make the same mistake again. Maybe other mistakes, but not the same one, thereby gaining experience and confidence.

The French proudly called him "The Napoleon of the checkerboard" when that small, sturdy man was in his heyday, fifteen years ago. At that time, the combination game celebrated its heyday, a battle of sparkling ingenuity, where unbridled imagination ruled. There was no theory that restrained creative

initiative, the ironclad law that replaced the chivalrous battle with open visor with probing and stirring strategies. "Everything is playable if well executed." That's what he could say, "le petit diable" with his lightning gaze, in his time, when he had nothing to fear but his opponents' insight before the board, and his mental weapons proved sharper and more pointed than others'. It was all about who had the most agility and deepest insight at the critical moment, qualities that enabled the little Frenchman to successfully withstand every attack on his world champion title for fifteen years.



And even though he was analytically lost many times, as long as he still had his resources and access to the treasure trove of practice, he couldn't care less. At that time, he could hardly imagine, he, the builder of the grandest castles in the air, who mocked and could mock theorists because he had unshakable self-confidence and believed in the triumph of insight before the board and during the game, surpassing all wisdom from study rooms. And every

tournament consistently proved him right, that it was precisely the theory that would undermine his game's precarious foundations. Weiss alone has produced more magnificence than all other masters combined, but his method was full of superficial brilliance; grand and impressive for a moment when victory seemed certain for the opponent being destroyed by a deeply intertwined combination but without a scientific basis. A gap in his game, which would be the seed of his defeat. But oh, what a track record before it came to that.

During the match between challenger Ton Sijbrands and Alexei Tsizjov for the world championship in 1990, Johan Krajenbrink was his second. In fact, he was his savior, always aiming to give Sijbrands confidence. Ultimately, thanks to his saving advice, a final game was played that Sijbrands could have won, saving the honor of the International Grandmaster. Tsizjov couldn't win the match against Sijbrands, and the latter had luck on his side. In fact, despite his age, Sijbrands was still the best in the world at that moment. After this match, some things were revealed:

Krajenbrink said about the emotions, "Behind the board, I quickly panic. I think I'm going to lose. As a second, I always tried to give Ton confidence. Even when the situation seemed hopeless, I said, 'It's still possible.' While I would have laughed at people who said that to me. It's just very important what feeling you start a game with. "Regarding the conflicts, one day Sijbrands wanted to choose a 'weak' continuation, avoiding tensions. Sijbrands said, "I felt a bit wronged then. Like, after so much bad luck, I deserve a refined rest day. And against Johan's advice, I played a cautious game." About the most intense discussion, it arose before the final game, in which Sijbrands had to win. "Johan wanted me to play a variation that, in my opinion, was not sound. I was afraid of losing." Krajenbrink said, "I wanted him to take all the risks, surprise his opponent. Draw or defeat would be the same for me." The opinion of the

second set the tone this time, and Sijbrands got a winning position on the board. It became an insane game; the spectators were engrossed in a packed hall from the beginning to the end. However, afterwards, both of them looked back at that final game very differently. Sijbrands as the philosopher: "Despite the loss, I felt less discomfort. Because in such an incredible game, I was so close to victory." Krajenbrink as the realist: "He could have played the most boring game of the century as long as he won. Now, the crowning glory remained elusive for me."

1.13.1 Business

In the business world, self-confidence holds significant importance as entrepreneurs, with self-assurance, dare to be themselves. With a clear sense of purpose and positive motives, they are conscious that they strive to do good, even if they unintentionally make mistakes. Unlike money-driven deal-makers or traders, an entrepreneur believes in acting with integrity and conscience. This confidence also makes entrepreneurs eager to receive feedback.

Self-assuredness, functioning as a sacred grail in the business realm, possesses an unmistakable uniqueness that can have a profound impact on an individual's or company's triumph. It invariably refers to a person's unwavering belief in their unparalleled capabilities, unrestrained skills, and boundless decision-making abilities within the intricate labyrinth of the business context.

Let us take a heady dive into the enchanting realm of self-confidence in the business world, where we are overwhelmed by a multitude of mesmerizing facets that captivate and astonish us:

Decision-making:

Oh, what a glorious competence springs forth from this wondrous self-assurance! It empowers business doyens to luxuriate in well-considered, thoughtful decisions that defy the primitive limits of the unknown. They, the custodians of self-confidence, calmly navigate the winding paths of risks, crafting strategic choices and making courageous decisions, free from the suffocating chains of doubt.

Leadership:

An indispensable companion of peerless leadership is the self-confidence that permeates the universe. Leaders, bearing this special aura, weave their visionary web with irresistible persuasion, inspiring and animating others to achieve great heights. Armed with this confidence, they embrace challenges with fearlessness and boldly engage in an epic dance with unpredictability, resulting in a symbiotic synergy that fills the air with an intoxicating scent of triumph.



Networking and Relationship Building:

Ah, the self-assurance that dances through the business world facilitates the enchanting alchemy of connecting with like-minded souls. A treasure that grants individuals the power to manifest themselves with authentic and enchanting grandeur, it is a key element in creating sacred alliances, enticing investors, or sealing enchanting business deals.

Dealing with Challenges:

The fearless self-confidence that rises like an immortal phoenix guides those who possess it with grace through the quagmire of challenges and setbacks. As seasoned entrepreneurs rise from the depths of failures, they transform these dark moments into a heavenly symphony of learning opportunities and precious growth prospects. Resolute and resilient, they rebuild themselves with self-renewing grace to overcome challenges with utmost dedication.

Self-presentation:

A glorious demeanor of self-confidence, exuding irresistible allure, weaves like an enchanting spell in the hearts of customers, investors, and partners. Self-confidence embraces the minds of their audience, eliciting belief in the unyielding credibility and reliability of their enterprise, like a phoenix rising from the ashes.

Innovation and Creativity:

Deep-rooted in self-confidence, self-assured individuals explore uncharted paths with fiery passion, fearlessly embracing the unknown. They deviate from beaten tracks, categorically refusing to hide in safe zones, and create bold solutions for seemingly insurmountable challenges. This audacious experiment with fate, unleashed by their

boundless self-confidence, acts as an engine for groundbreaking innovations and brilliant business success.

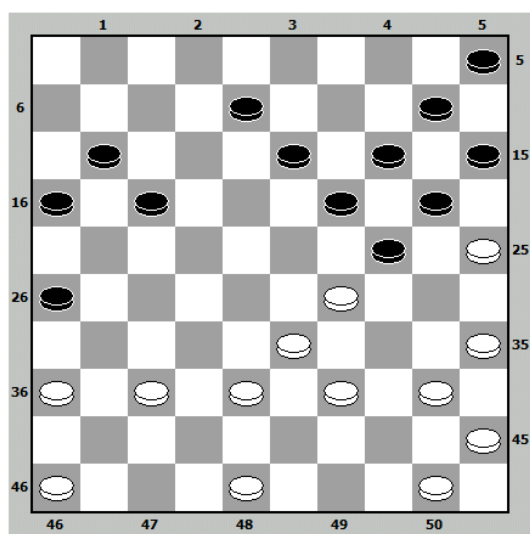
The cosmic dance of self-confidence in the business world reveals itself as a sublime watercolor, but one that requires constant nurturing and guidance. The seeds of self-confidence blossom through goal achievement, absorbing knowledge and experience, basking in the rays of positive influences, and facing challenging trials.

The essence of self-confidence in the business world permeates us with a mystical and intoxicating glow. It is an elusive secret language that reveals the nature of successful entrepreneurs, a vibrant tableau that many wish to embrace, but only a few can truly decipher. It is a cosmic dance between triumph and adversity, where self-confidence serves as an unwavering guide in the enchanting universe of business.

1.14 Deceiving

Not a pleasant word, but there is no doubt that we often try to deceive the opponent to provoke a faulty move. In this case, it is better to illustrate this characteristic that occurs in the game of draughts with a diagram.

In the following position, black has a disadvantageous position, as his long wing is completely locked up. Deliberately, white made a move that seemingly gives black the possibility to free himself from the confinement. Therefore, white played 42-37.



Unsuspecting, black tries to free himself by playing 17-22? With this move, he subsequently threatens to play 22-28 to escape the confinement. However, white has thoroughly deceived black, as now follows a beautiful capturing move with 29-23, 33-29, 36x9,

25x14, 39-33, 40-34, and 35x2, resulting in a win for white.

The draughts player Andris Andreiko also enjoyed deceiving his opponents. Sometimes his behavior was unsportsmanlike, and his reputation suffered when he won against the then 14-year-old Harm Wiersma through time pressure and deceiving his opponent in 1967. During time pressure, Wiersma did not notate his moves, which is not mandatory in such a case. However, Andreiko did so. Wiersma noticed on Andreiko's notation sheet that the 50 moves had been played, and then his flag fell. Andreiko approached the referee and claimed that Wiersma's flag had fallen on the 49th move. This turned out to be true. The clever Andreiko had intentionally recorded an additional move, and the young Harm fell into the trap.



Far left in photo: Andris Andreiko, 1967

Of course, Wiersma learned from this bad experience and also applied a psychological trick in his game against Clerc during the World Draughts Championship in 1974: After the fifty-move rule had already been exceeded, Wiersma continued to play quickly to give Clerc, who couldn't keep up with notation, the impression that there was still time pressure. This trick worked wonders: Clerc made a serious mistake on the fifty-second move and ended up in a lost endgame.

1.14.1 Business

In business as well, we can try to deceive our competitors, or rather, mislead them. For example, we can pretend to introduce a new product, thereby forcing the competitor to spend a lot of time on it. We also see that antivirus companies are engaged in deceiving their competitors. They may have developed a form of malware that makes the competitor believe they are hunting for dangerous files, when in reality they are not. So, there are various ways to deceive competitors in order to maintain an advantage over them. However, it must be clear that such methods must be applied in accordance with applicable laws. In other words, business practices must remain ethically responsible.



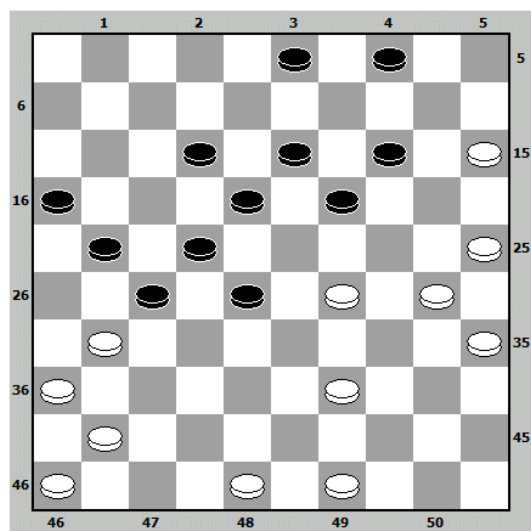
So let us dance to the rhythm of honesty and integrity, and enrich the universe of business with the clarity of truth and transparency. For in the vibrant spectacle of ethical action, an immortal truth shines: the power of honesty will always triumph and pave a glorious route to sustainable success.

1.15 Decisions

If you look closely, a person's life is actually one big succession of decisions. Sometimes small, sometimes big decisions. Making decisions too quickly is suppressed in playing checkers, while also learning to make well-founded decisions under pressure.

Every move on the checkerboard is a process of making a decision. In this way, one learns to make decisions more intuitively in everyday life, which saves time and energy. Checkers players often have to make continuous decisions under time pressure. For this, it is necessary to devise a strategic plan for the long term.

Aleksej Tsjizjov



Harm Wiersma

Challenger Harm Wiersma had done everything to eliminate his deficit in the 18th round, but Tsjizjov effectively countered Wiersma's attack. On the 35th move, Wiersma had to make a significant decision. According to the theoreticians, 35. 30-24, 19x30 36. 35x24 was also an option, but Wiersma saw problems after the exchange 13-19, after which the blacks have an ideal defensive formation. After 35. 49-43, 14-20! and after 35. 31-26, 12-17, the blacks always have the maneuver 27-31 with a predominantly advantageous position for the world champion. For these reasons, Wiersma decided to play 49-44. The game finally ended in a draw, and the match for the world championship ended with a score of 19-17 in favor of the Russian in January 1994.



Harm Wiersma against Aleksey Tsizjov

The decision-making ability of players is trained through fast games of checkers that do not last more than 10 minutes for the entire game. In this way, players learn to think quickly and make decisions under time pressure, which also benefits their potential future business life.

The decisions of older people are often better, although they usually take longer to make them. In some respects, you could even say that young people are at a disadvantage because they can only compensate for their lack of information, experience, and wisdom with speed.

Cognitive scientist Vinod Venkatraman showed that after one night of sleep deprivation, the brain areas related to successful risky decision-making become less adequate. In summary, good sleep is crucial for making the right decisions.

1.15.1 Business

Making the right decisions in business unleashes a complex and layered process, saturated with an abundance of intriguing and confusing variables that pierce the cosmic darkness like sparkling stars. Here, in this breathtaking odyssey, are some crucial and brilliant steps and considerations that, like cosmic melodies, envelop your soul and guide you through the mist of triumph and captivating choices:

Gather information:

Discover the hidden jewels of relevant knowledge and treasures of information that surround the horizon of your consciousness like undiscovered star

clusters. Unearth the truth in the complex labyrinth of data, unravel the patterns, and gain insights from the deepest universal sources.

Define your objectives:

Set clear goals. What do you want to achieve with your decision? Ensure your objectives are achievable, measurable, and relevant.

Identify the alternatives:

Explore different options and alternatives available to achieve your objectives. Weigh the pros and cons of each option.



Analyze the risks:

Plunge into the depths of risks and possible consequences that pierce each option like a swarm of meteors. Reflect and anticipate the dazzling dance of effects each choice can bring, and savor the unfathomable essence of each outcome that manifests like an unpredictable stellar explosion.

Consult others:

Involve relevant stakeholders and experts in your decision-making process. Considering different perspectives and opinions can provide valuable insights.

Take your time:

Do not rush to make important decisions. Grant yourself the refreshing gifts of time and space, and let the impressive whirlwind of information penetrate your thoughts and soul. Merge with the galactic essence of the different options and let their complexity imbue you like charming nebulas before conducting the cosmic symphony of your final decision.

Listen to your intuition:

Give your intuition the opportunity to illuminate the hidden paths of your consciousness like a mystical and accurate guide. Observe the dance of constellations of your intuition and trust their brilliant guidance when the hour of cosmic choice arrives.

Assume responsibility:

Embrace the glorious truth that each decision influences your life's journey like a shining supernova. Attribute responsibility to your choices, both the dazzling triumphs and the darkest depths, and cherish the immortal lessons of each cosmic expedition. Learn from any mistakes and see them as learning moments for the future.

Monitor and evaluate:

After making a decision, observe the results and evaluate if they contributed to achieving your

objectives. If necessary, be prepared to make adjustments.

Develop your decision-making skills:

Let your decision-making skills flourish like a cosmic star cluster continually expanding. Nourish your mind and soul with knowledge, wisdom, and experience, and witness how your ability to forge choices unfolds like a radiant supernova.

Through this lofty combination of universal analysis, strategic prowess, intuitive guidance, and boundless responsibility, you will be equipped to discover the radiant jewels of the right decisions in the resplendent universe of business. Let your enterprise ascend like a glorious star and embark on the path of cosmic triumph and glory.

1.16 Decisiveness

Gerard Bakker's extensive article on Raymond Saint-Fort (Haiti) in 1962 enlightens us about decisiveness:

The game of checkers demands decisiveness, caution, and evaluative prowess from its players: one must pursue an attack when the position calls for it, while also acknowledging that in checkers, the best offense is a solid defense.



Raymond Saint-Fort

According to former world champion Piet Roozenburg, every player may find themselves in time trouble on occasion, but such instances should remain the exception; it should never escalate to the point where a significant percentage of games are simply marred by a lack of thinking time. In about 9 out of 10 cases, it is indeed not a shortage of allocated time, but rather a deficiency in decisiveness that plagues the players.

Tsjizjov, the Russian player, stood in stark contrast to this, as spectators marveled at his decisiveness and swift play. Even in challenging positions, Tsjizjov demonstrated his decisiveness. In the decisive phase of the game, he still had a quarter of an hour of thinking time left, while his challenger Harm Wiersma, in contention for the world championship, had to make 10 moves in 3 minutes. Wiersma showcased his decisiveness by finding the path to a draw in his eighth game at the end of December 1993, despite being under significant time pressure. He surely owed such skills to the countless speed games he had played.

Rapid checkers are highly popular in the Netherlands. This popularity is easily understood. It is a very suitable form of training, with players engaging in about fifteen games per day/night, and they can experiment to their heart's content. Due to the limited thinking time, ten minutes per player per game, decisiveness increases. Naturally, there are many errors in rapid play, but some games are indistinguishable from "real" ones.

However, rapid checkers primarily means quick thinking and, above all, making swift decisions. Moves must be chosen almost intuitively. Especially at the beginning of a rapid game, the pace can be murderous, in order to save some thinking space for the middle and endgame. Once a rapid player is "warmed up," it is as if they execute moves in a trance-like state. Seemingly nonchalantly, they move the pieces across the board, leaving spectators genuinely amazed and in wonder when, as if by magic, a brilliant combination emerges from the position. Rapid checkers are attractive to the audience but exceedingly demanding for the

participants, who must summon their utmost concentration and decisiveness.

Younger players tend to excel at this, as they can think faster. However, to achieve good decisiveness, a player is required to possess more than just quick thinking; qualities like perseverance are also necessary.

"Decision-making" and "decisiveness" are two related terms, yet they bear differences in meaning. Intriguing concepts unfold before us as "Decision-making" leads to an enchanting universe of possibilities. A spectacle where we navigate through an endless sea of options, a symphony of complexity defying comprehension. It is a quest for the perfect path, a journey guiding us along a labyrinth of trails, each possessing its own alluring charm. Yet, behold, another phenomenon awaits us - "Decisiveness." A burst of determination striking us like a lightning bolt, enabling us to navigate the storm of uncertainty with unwavering confidence. It is a current of energy permeating our minds, empowering us to act swiftly and effectively amidst great pressure. "Decision-making" and "Decisiveness," two astral forces embracing each other in the cosmic dance of our existence. They complement each other like the rays of a double star, shining with unparalleled intensity. It is the symbiosis of exploration and action, of thoughtfulness and determination, that allows us to tread the path of the universe with grace and courage. In this thrilling cosmos, decision-making and the art of decisiveness are our guides, illuminating possibilities as we navigate amid seemingly endless darkness. So, let us press on, with an impassioned spirit and a beating heart, in search of the celestial heights of decision-making and the cosmic explosion of decisiveness. In brief, "decision-

making" is the process of making choices, while "decisiveness" relates to the quality and ability to make decisions swiftly and effectively.

1.16.1 Business

Decisiveness, as a lightning flash in the obscurity of business life, assumes monumental significance. In this ever-changing realm of commerce, swift and efficient decisions weave the foundations of triumph. Let us explore why the unwavering essence of decisiveness is of immeasurable value in the tumultuous kingdom of trade:

Timeless Timeliness:

In the lush gardens of business life, decision-making buds perpetually emerge. Mastering the art of lightning-fast action empowers companies to seize glistening opportunities, unravel intricate predicaments, and dance with the capricious turns of the market. Delays can lead to missed opportunities or the loss of competitive advantage.

Risk Management:

Decisiveness empowers entrepreneurs and business leaders to respond swiftly to risks and threats. By acting quickly and effectively, they can minimize potential issues or prevent minor problems from escalating into major crises.

Glistening Competitive Edge:

Decisiveness drapes companies in a radiance that swiftly transforms their souls, enabling them to anticipate fiery market upheavals and capitalize on

untapped opportunities. This fiery light grants them a splendid competitive edge over rivals who chase delays as a wisp of darkness.

Efficiency:

Decisiveness fosters efficiency within an organization. When leaders can make quick decisions, teams can act faster and achieve goals more promptly. This enhances the company's productivity and performance.



Confidence:

Decisiveness radiates confidence to employees, investors, and customers. It indicates that leaders know what they are doing and are willing to take the necessary steps to move forward.

Innovation:

Decisiveness encourages innovation. This privilege allows companies to swiftly evaluate and implement

groundbreaking ideas, sprouting new buds of business opportunity.

In essence, decisiveness, as a precious gem in the treasury of business life, elevates companies to collect rare gems of opportunity, dispel complex challenges, foster breeze-like efficiency, and attain a unique competitive advantage. In this world of swift changes and unyielding demands, decisiveness remains a radiant key to success.

1.17 Discipline

Success is nothing more than a few disciplines, practiced every day. Discipline means leading your life with the right rules and systems that will help you achieve your goals. When we lead a disciplined life, we start improving our habits, which enhances our personality and our life. Discipline is the factor that ensures we learn all the principles necessary to succeed in life. It is one of the most important lessons that will benefit you throughout your life. By regularly playing draughts (checkers) from a young age, children learn the importance of discipline.

Many people think that education is enough in life to move forward. You've studied, and I haven't. This is roughly the mindset of most people who haven't had much schooling. They believe that others who have studied are at a strong advantage compared to them. But those who think this way assume that money and intelligence are necessary conditions for success in life. However, experience teaches otherwise. It's far from certain that someone who has been able to attend high school or even a university or college and has gained all sorts of knowledge there, now possesses everything needed to make their life a success. The fact that thousands who have received secondary and higher education lead a mediocre and even a worrisome existence throughout their lives is the best evidence to the contrary. On the other hand, there are thousands who have had no more than an elementary education and yet belong to the greatest in the country.

So, is it not necessary to study? Certainly, it is, but studying is very different from simply attending a

high school or a university and listening to wise advice there. It is a completely mistaken notion that someone who has the opportunity to study just needs to sit and have the lessons implanted in their head. The practice shows that it's quite different. How else could it happen that children of wealthy parents often receive the most expensive lessons from the best teachers and yet don't progress? And how could it be that people with an academic education are often unable to earn their living? ... Well," you might say, "doesn't this show how difficult the times are? If people who have studied can't achieve anything, how can you expect those who haven't had any education at all to amount to anything?" Before answering your question, in which you apparently assume that everyone who receives secondary or higher education also studies, it's important to point out that there are at least as many cases of people who haven't "studied" and yet have advanced.

"Studying" and studying. The matter is actually quite simple. It may seem a bit strange when said, but if you think about it, you'll understand the intention: Many people who have "studied" haven't really studied; on the other hand, many others who haven't "studied" have indeed studied. For, it must be reiterated here: studying is not sitting down and having all sorts of interesting things poured into you. Those who truly study are never passive; they are active. This is even so strong that, in fact, you have to teach yourself everything. Sure, a teacher can select the material for you, organize it for you, and present it to you in a pleasant way. But this material, no matter how well and pleasantly it's presented to you, will only become your intellectual property if it has been incorporated into your flesh and blood. And you certainly understand that the best teacher, the most excellent instructor, and the most learned professor

cannot take on that task for you. Just as your stomach and other digestive organs must process the physical food that is presented to you so that it becomes flesh of your flesh and blood of your blood, your mental faculties must process the mental food that is presented to you so that it eventually passes into the finest fibers of your personality.



You may have noticed that at the end of the sentence you just read, we spoke of personality and not intellect. This was done deliberately. If you've taken to heart the words you were given at the beginning of this "Guide to Study," you'll wonder why this was done. The answer may perhaps surprise you at first, but upon further consideration, you'll see its correctness. Intellect is not the most important factor in studying. Certainly, a certain level of intellect is needed to study, but with the best intellect, you won't achieve much if it's not fertilized by all sorts of

qualities that are not of an intellectual nature. Interest, enthusiasm, dedication, diligence, zeal, thoroughness, perseverance, a sense of duty, to name just a few, are of vital importance. Someone who hasn't cultivated these qualities, and other similar ones, will never go far with their studies. Yes, you can even say that a person with relatively low intellectual aptitude but possessing these qualities will go much further in their studies than someone with great intelligence but who is totally or partially lacking in these qualities. You now understand better why so many "educated" individuals, even those with university degrees, with their so-called science, achieve so little. They don't have the most essential elements in their baggage necessary to fight for existence. On the other hand, you won't be as surprised that people with little more than an elementary education have succeeded to such an extent. Among them, you'll find individuals whose intelligence isn't so great and who haven't been financially as privileged as those who had the privilege of "studying." But they possessed to a greater extent the character traits that truly make studying fruitful. Thanks to their zeal, dedication, perseverance, and determination to succeed, they managed to catch up with the disadvantage with which they started the struggle for existence. They truly studied; studied without quotation marks. They taught themselves what others, more favored by fate, received fully prepared. They benefited from lessons they received in a hundred different ways outside any formal education. Their knowledge was acquired in lessons that were almost imperceptibly given to them in friendly conversations. Each lesson they received was a stimulus for them to study further.

That's the explanation for the fact that many achievements, which you rightfully admire, have

been accomplished by people who, at first glance, seemed less well-equipped than others who appeared to have everything at hand to succeed. You may know that Henry Ford did not pursue an engineering education and did not even receive formal schooling. However, this did not prevent him from becoming one of the most brilliant car designers. Ford was always studying in his own way, and he said the following about it:

Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young.

Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone, was a speech teacher; he had never studied physics. The rubber tire for bicycles and cars was curiously invented by a veterinarian, John Dunlop. There are many more examples that could be given.

Don't be tempted to think that whether you've studied or not doesn't matter for achieving success. Studying, systematic studying, is indeed the only method that leads to good results. But to study systematically, it is not necessary to attend a specific school. Others can show you the way, but in the end, you'll have to learn the art of systematic studying yourself. Richard Branson (1950) - Virgin - Stopped attending high school at the age of 16 to start a student magazine. It's noteworthy that he was dyslexic. The billionaire Branson very clearly expresses what has been described here as a school education:

Education doesn't just happen in cramped classrooms and university buildings; it can happen anywhere, every day, for everyone.

Raymond Saint-Fort (Haiti) states in his book the following about discipline:

The game of draughts (checkers) teaches one to submit to rules, it cultivates a sense of discipline.

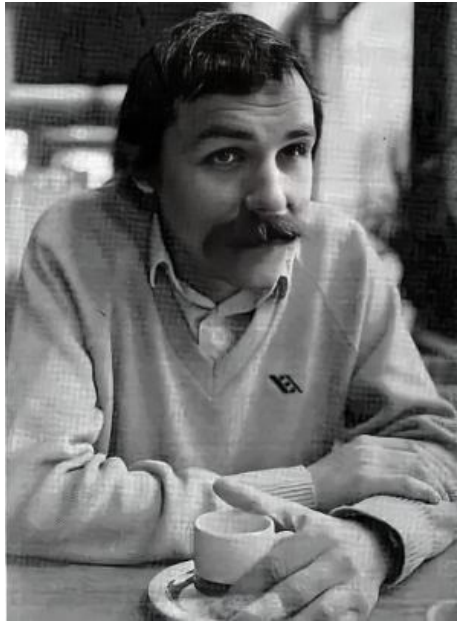


**Alexei Tsizjov and Guntis Valneris, 2005
(Photo: Hanco Elenbaas)**

Auke Scholma praised the discipline of the former world champion Guntis Valneris: "He comes from the old Russian school. They just drilled that into you. For Western guys, it's difficult to live like a

recluse for three weeks, but those 'Russians' don't know any different."

The journey of Harm Wiersma in the world of the game of draughts (checkers) actually began at the end of the tumultuous 1960s, when he left student life behind and immersed his entire being in the sport.



In that initial phase, his discipline left something to be desired, but a crucial turning point followed in the year 1980. It was then that he took a hard look at himself and came to the conclusion that, in addition to the game of draughts (checkers), he could just as well have continued his studies. This realization marked a decisive moment in his evolution. However, it remains a hard truth that discipline does not thrive in the world of most draughts (checkers) players.

But like a masterful game on the board, Wiersma found a way to embrace and embody the art of discipline. His horizon expanded like the colorful wings of a butterfly discovering new flowers. He developed a fascination for a range of diverse topics, and with iron will and determination, he took on countless challenges.

It seems that with each new interest, each new endeavor, he conducted a symphony of discipline. Like a virtuoso in multiple fields, he showed that discipline doesn't have to be limited to the game of draughts (checkers) but can indeed be the core that enables us to excel in every sphere of life.

Wiersma's journey is a lesson in human evolution, a masterful tapestry of determination and discovery. He reminds us that we are the creators of our own destiny, that discipline is the key that grants us access to unprecedented heights, both within and outside the chessboards of our lives. It is like a golden thread running through the looms of time, a story of growth, resilience, and unwavering determination. And so, Wiersma continues, not only as a grandmaster on the board but as a grandmaster of life, an inspiring example of what can be achieved with an unwavering spirit and an unparalleled passion for learning and growing.

1.17.1 Business

Discipline is extremely important in the business world, as it forms the backbone of success in the business arena. It's not just a characteristic; it's a lifestyle that embodies ardor, consistency, and determination. Here are some key aspects of why discipline is indispensable in the game of business:

Productivity:

Discipline helps maintain a structured approach to work, increasing productivity. It ensures that tasks are completed on time and that work is done efficiently.

Goal Orientation:

Discipline enables individuals and teams to stay focused on the set goals. It avoids distractions and helps prioritize tasks that contribute to achieving those goals.

Reliability: Discipline is a symbol of reliability. When we honor our commitments and deadlines, we inspire trust among our colleagues, customers, and partners. This reliability is at the core of strong business relationships.

Effective Leadership:

Leaders who show discipline serve as an example to others. They inspire their teams to stay organized and focused, benefiting the overall efficiency of the organization.

Stress Management:

Discipline can help reduce stress by managing tasks and responsibilities in an organized manner. It avoids last-minute rushes, improving the quality of work and overall well-being.

Efficiency:

Discipline leads to efficiency. It helps us organize tasks, meet deadlines, and prioritize. This maximizes productivity and allows us to accomplish more in the same amount of time.



Focus:

In a world full of distractions, focus is precious. Discipline allows us to concentrate on the most important tasks and goals, helping us maintain an overview and not getting lost in irrelevant details.

Business Success:

Discipline is the key to business success. It leads to consistent performance, reliable partnerships, and a

reputation for integrity. In a competitive market, these qualities are invaluable.

Personal Development:

Discipline extends to personal growth. It allows individuals to continuously improve their skills and knowledge, enriching not only their professional life but also their overall quality of life.

Professionalism:

Discipline is often associated with professionalism. It signifies respect for others' time, deadlines, and keeping commitments, which is essential for a positive business reputation.

Decision-Making:

Decision-making is a crucial cornerstone of success in the complex business landscape. This is where discipline comes into play as an indispensable companion to rational decision-making. Discipline ensures that we are not overwhelmed by momentary impulses. It prevents us from acting based on temporary emotions, external pressures, or the pursuit of quick gains. Instead, discipline allows us to pause, dive into the world of analysis and reflection.

In essence, discipline is a valuable asset for individuals and organizations in the business world. It's not a constraint but a reinforcement of our potential. Cultivating discipline is an investment for the future, a journey towards lasting success, and a clear path to excellence.

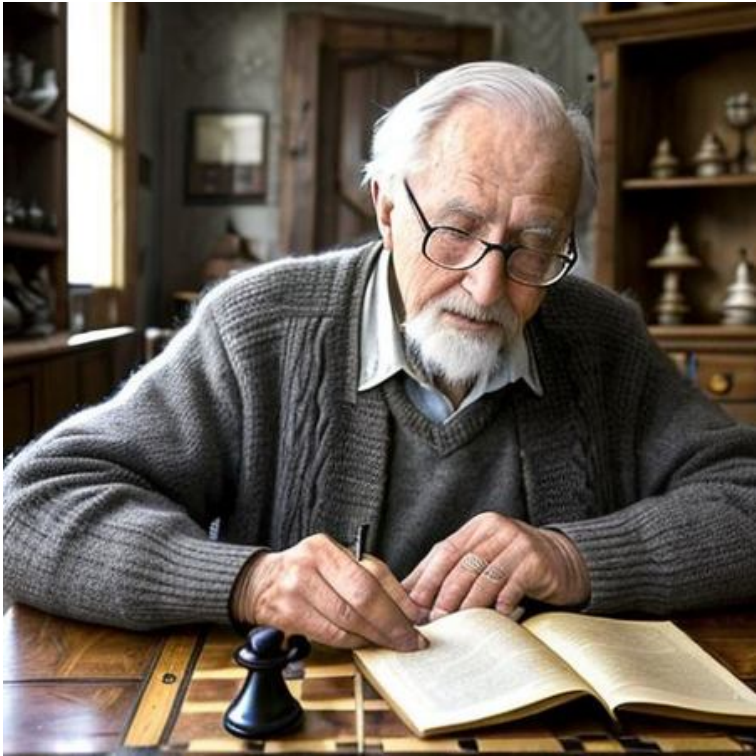
1.18 Experience

A study of the characteristics of chess has shown that experience is above all essential to belong to the top. Dr. Max Euwe (chess), Herman Filarski (bridge), and Piet Roozenburg (draughts) participated in this study.

One characteristic that chess players, draughts players, and bridge players must possess above all to reach the top is experience. Experience, and again experience. But, you will immediately object, there are tens of thousands of practitioners of these noble games who play for decades and never get far. And how can a fifteen-year-old chess player like Bobby Fischer already have reached the top? And Spasski? Raichenbach became world champion at nineteen, and without the Second World War, Ghestem and Roozenburg would have won the world title at around twenty years old.

By experience, we mean what Professor Dr. A. D. de Groot called experience (in more general terms) in his thesis "The thinking of the chess player". One plays, analyzes, and studies a lot, but what matters is what one learns from it. Abstraction ability also plays a role. The greater and more refined this ability, the better the player. One plays and analyzes one's own games or games, studies those of others, and above all, compares, classifies, and reduces them to a number of basic forms, with or without exceptions. One learns that in such a position, this or that is strong or weak, like an isolated pawn, a peripheral piece, or a unique move. The more extensive and refined this scheme is, the stronger the player becomes.

It is clear that abstraction ability is a matter of disposition and talent, but it has also been established that the core of this disposition can only be developed through experience (in more general terms), by doing a lot. To reach great heights, one must have had a passion for chess, draughts, or bridge, preferably at a young age. At a young age, one learns more easily than later, and mind games are no exception.



It goes without saying that memory also plays a major role. The (Grand)master remembers that at this moment, this particular position arose and how it went at that time. This memory can be applied in practice, whether modified or unmodified. Thus,

memory cultivates new experiences. One must realize that all these processes often take place unconsciously, as was the case with the Dutch chess champion Jan-Hein Donner.

However, we want to emphasize that the parenthetical phrase "modified or unmodified" plays a role. Learning and memorization alone is not enough, as our three "test subjects" made clear. Roozenburg, in particular, emphasized that uninhibitedness can play an important role. Often, it comes down to the fact that players must abandon the beaten paths, both those trodden by others and their own. It still happens too often, even at the highest level, that players get stuck in a frame of thought, in their own mental schema. As long as everything fits within that frame, things go well. But as soon as the position requires a measure outside that frame, things go wrong. Then the player must think uninhibitedly and originally outside their own mental framework.

1.18.1 Business

In the majestic realm of business, the concept of "experience" reveals itself as an unparalleled treasure and becomes an indispensable element for achieving success. Experience refers to the knowledge, skills, insights, and understanding that a person or organization has acquired over many years through involvement in numerous business situations, challenges, and opportunities. It is an accumulation of learned lessons, practical know-how, and virtuosity that contributes to making superior decisions and navigating through labyrinthine business environments. And now, in your presence,

follow some aspects that testify to the immense importance of experience in the business world:

Decision Making

Experience provides leaders and entrepreneurs with a significant advantage in decision making. Drawn from similar situations they have encountered before, they are able to assess with lightning speed what is effective and what is not, leading to more effective decision-making and better risk management.



Problem Solving

Skillful in handling business challenges, experienced professionals approach these complexities thoughtfully. They are capable of generating imaginative solutions and use their acquired knowledge to successfully overcome obstacles.

Relationship Management

Over time, experienced individuals build valuable networks and gain the ability to interact effectively with customers, colleagues, suppliers, and other stakeholders.

Innovation

Experience acts as a stimulant for innovation. Based on their knowledge of past triumphs and failures, companies can sow the seeds of new ideas and refine existing processes.

Trust

Experienced professionals exude confidence unmistakably. Customers, investors, and partners generally feel more secure collaborating with those who have already proven themselves as experts in success.

Crisis Management

In times of testing, experience becomes an invaluable treasure. Experienced leaders maintain their composure and are highly skilled in effective action, enabling them to guide their organization effortlessly through challenging periods.

Employee Development

Experienced leaders pass on their valuable knowledge and expertise to young employees, thereby strengthening the entire organization.

It should be noted, however, that experience alone does not guarantee success. The key lies in how this experience is utilized and applied in the current context. Experience should be coupled with an insatiable thirst for knowledge, the ability to adapt to changing conditions, and a proactive attitude to continue a continuous growth process.

1.19 Fighter Mentality

Why do certain brilliant draughts players completely avoid confrontation, a test of strength against other skilled draughts players?



Piet Roozenburg

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piet_Roozenburg

Harm Wiersma never shied away from the battle. In 1971, when he was 18 years old, he won against Koeperman at the Scholten-Honig tournament in Hoogezand, something Sijbrands had never achieved. That same year, he also managed to defeat Piet Roozenburg. A year earlier, Roozenburg had stated in an interview that he held Wiersma in very high esteem. "When Wiersma is at the board, he forgets everything around him. He's a fighter." Now Roozenburg experienced that himself firsthand.

In 1972, the combative Wiersma made it clear that Ton Sijbrands had to prove that he truly stood at the top in the Netherlands, as Sijbrands claimed at the time. This remark made by Sijbrands in 1971 had strongly provoked Harm Wiersma, and as a result, the Netherlands' first professional draughts player had gained a formidable opponent. Wiersma stated at the time: "I don't need to lose to anyone anymore. I know enough systems that prevent you from losing. However, you have to win against those just below the top, like Baba Sy, Kuyken, and even Koeperman, and that's the big problem. But if you want to become a champion, you have to beat them."



Prof. Adrianus Dingeman de Groot
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adriaan_de_Groot

Not only mathematical thinking is important, according to Professor De Groot (The Thinking of the Chess Player), but an array of mental characteristics also plays an equally significant role. "The mindset of

top players is also reflected in everyday life: the idea of winning, the willingness to take the risk of losing, the recognition of a hierarchy (he is better than I am), these are mental traits that mind sports athletes have even when they are not playing. They must be able to handle their losses and must be aware that through thinking it's possible to improve more than someone they've lost to in the past. Virtually all chess and draughts players have a fighting spirit.

A multitude of factors come into play in mind sports. It's known that most top players (both draughts and chess) reach their peak between the ages of thirty and forty. "Physical factors also play a role here," says Professor De Groot. "Playing matches is simply hard work; you think yourself into exhaustion. After forty, the player's knowledge remains, but thinking becomes a bit slower, as does learning and keeping up with new theories. Young chess players strive to 'accelerate the learning process' by playing a lot.

In the world of draughts, physical and psychological exertion are closely intertwined, as noted by Eddy Budé, who experienced a pressing need during the time pressure phase. His opponent Maarten de Heer had half an hour left, Eddy Budé had only two minutes for the final eight moves. "I urgently needed to go to the toilet, but you can't leave the board."

"Draughts," explains De Groot, "is also used in elementary schools to teach some of these characteristics. 'Draughts in Primary School' is the title of Bert Dollekamp's work, through which children learn, for example, to abide by certain rules of the game. It can also be used to instill a mindset that says you can achieve something through thinking, and children can learn to accept defeat or fight against it. These are pedagogical applications of

cognitive psychology, formerly known as thinking psychology.



Bert Dollekamp

<https://www.hannn.eu/nieuws/onderwijskundige-met-een-zwak-voor-dammen>

Regarding combativeness, I like to bring up the name of Harm Wiersma. This draughts player combines his great talent with an excellent competitive mentality. He once said, "I still can't handle losing." In 1984, he grew tired of draughts and the draughts world. He wanted to do something different. Eight years later, Wiersma made his comeback and immediately became the Dutch champion.

Alexander Baljakin was trainer for the youth draughts players in Huissen in 2006. Originally from Russia, he was world junior champion in 1980 and has been in the Netherlands since 2001. As a trainer, he has his own opinions on becoming a good draughts player, which do include the word "fighting spirit":

"Memory does matter and in addition mentality. Ton Sijbrands is probably the best in the world in terms of memory and ability. But that doesn't mean he wins every game. Precisely because he sees so many things, he cannot always unwind to a win. Sometimes you have to dare to take risks and Sijbrands does not do that. At the club I now also have a boy who has a lot to offer strategically and analytically. But what he lacks is fighting spirit. So you won't get anywhere with that."



Alexander Baljakin

Foto: Bart Molendijk/ Anefo – Nationaal Archief

Alexeï Tsjizjov was not only world champion in 1990, but also considered himself "the best draughts player in the world." He believes that the Netherlands has draughts players as strong as Russia, but when he lists names, he only mentions Ton Sijbrands and Harm Wiersma, "if the latter ever intends to return." In terms of mentality, the Russians are leagues ahead of the easygoing and satiated Westerners. "Life is harder in Russia. We have to overcome problems constantly. Fighting has become our second nature."

1.19.1 Business

In the arena of business activities, an inflexible disposition undoubtedly becomes a valuable asset. However, let's not forget that the type of mental disposition one displays can present a deceiving spectrum, depending on circumstances, industry, and individual context. The inflexible disposition is often associated with traits such as steadfastness, adaptability, and the fearlessness to face challenges. Here, an interplay of strategies manifests, in which an inflexible disposition excels in providing support:

The fruits of a warrior mentality in business operations can crystallize as follows:

Unyieldingness:

A warrior mentality serves as a guide for overcoming obstacles and rising from the ashes of setbacks. This can be of paramount importance when pursuing business objectives.

Skill in Change:

In the unpredictable business arena, resilience can support you in embracing adjustments, even when they appear like a lightning bolt from a clear sky. It allows you to change course and tread new paths.

Focused on Objectives:

An inflexible disposition ensures that your focus remains unwaveringly directed towards the goals to be achieved, even when the journey is through rugged terrain. It provides the steadfastness to thrive through incremental progress.



Entrepreneurial Initiative:

Entrepreneurs with an inflexible disposition are often proactive. They seize the opportunity to discover new perspectives and harbor the willingness to confront risks when necessary.

Learning Backwards:

The warrior spirit also encompasses the dedication to learn from missteps and losses, which can lead to personal and professional expansion.

However, let's maintain a balanced course. An excessively aggressive warrior mentality can lead to recklessness, unnecessary conflicts, and the blind neglect of input from others. In certain scenarios, a more cooperative or flexible approach may yield greater results. Each individual possesses their own flair and approach, harmonizing with personality and ambitions. What is most crucial concerns awareness of the context and the requisite flexibility to adjust the narrative when required at a critical moment."

1.20 Influence and Impact

In the Dutch Championship of 1981, the draughts player Hans Jansen won many times through simple combinations, leading people to believe that there was a mental influence on the players. It was, in any case, fascinating to observe that many made mistakes against Jansen that they would certainly not have made otherwise. It was even suggested that Jansen might be able to influence his opponents himself. Probably Jansen was simply more adept at provoking mistakes in his opponents.



Harm Wiersma as a magician

During the "78" match between Rob Clerc and Harm Wiersma on February 8, 1978, Harm Wiersma sat behind his draughts board wearing the clothes of a magician. The next day, Rob Clerc sat behind his board wearing sunglasses. Whatever it may be, grandmasters at this level are no longer influenced by such tricks. Nevertheless, such antics are recommended to make draughts more appealing to the public.

The game of a draughts player can be influenced by various circumstances. Here are some important factors that can have an impact on the game of a draughts player:

Time:

The available thinking time is a crucial factor. Time pressure can lead to hasty decisions and mistakes. On the other hand, taking too much time can result in overanalysis and doubt.

Position on the board:

The position of the draughts pieces on the board directly affects the strategic options of the player. Positions with different dynamics can vary in their suitability for offensive or defensive approaches.

The Opponent:

Naturally, our game is also influenced by the playing style of our opponent. As he becomes more skilled, his influence on our game also increases. Therefore, it is necessary to know our opponent's style in a timely manner in order to adjust our own style and avoid surprises.

Previous Moves:

Previous moves in the game can influence the current position and available options. A single move can trigger a chain reaction of events.

Tactical and Strategic Competence:

The ability to recognize and apply tactics and strategic approaches, such as combinations, sacrifices, and exploiting positional advantages, plays a crucial role.

Psychological Influences:

Emotional and cognitive factors, including attention, self-confidence, perseverance, and stress resilience, can influence a player's decision-making process.

Experience and Insight:

In-depth experience in the game often provides players with a broader range of strategic approaches and tactical options, along with a deeper understanding of the game mechanisms.

Preparation and Planning:

Thorough preparation before a match, including analyzing opening moves, can give a player a prominent position by gaining knowledge and understanding of the positional aspects.

The Game Environment:

The environment in which the draughts game is played is also important to consider, as noise levels, cold, heat, crowds, distractions, and comfort can influence the player's concentration.

Individual Playing Style:

Each player employs a unique playing style, ranging from aggressive to defensive. This personal playing

style influences decisions and choices throughout the game.

Objectives:

The specific objectives a player has for a match - winning, playing for a draw, or practicing certain tactics - can influence the game.

It is important for a draughts player to take all these circumstances into account and manage them effectively in order to be successful in the game.

1.20.1 Business

Similarly, our business life can also be influenced by various circumstances, both internal and external. Some of these conditions are:

Natural State:

Natural disasters, weather patterns, and climate change can impact our business in terms of supply chains, infrastructure, and business continuity.

Opportunities for Innovation:

Rapidly evolving technologies offer new opportunities for innovation and efficiency in our business. However, those who do not keep up with the technological trend can fall behind.

Rules and Regulations:

Shifts in laws and regulations, both locally and internationally, can have a significant impact on our business, and we need to stay up to date to prevent disappointments.

Social Wave:

Consumer preferences and cultural norms can influence the demand for products and services.

Political Movements:

We must always stay well-informed about instability, political decision-making, and policy changes, as these conditions can affect companies, especially on the international stage.



Green Pressure:

An increasing focus on environmental issues and sustainability can shape corporate culture, production methods, and reputation.

Financial Path:

Access to capital, credit terms, and financial performance can determine a company's room for investments and growth.

Labor Force Waves:

Labor market conditions, including the availability of qualified personnel and labor conflicts, can influence how companies recruit and retain their teams.

These various conditions can be complex and interconnected, forming the context in which businesses operate. It is crucial for companies to understand these conditions and develop resilient strategies to cope with changes and seize opportunities."

1.21 Inquisitiveness

Inquisitiveness plays an essential and decisive role in the game of draughts, and can even be considered a determining factor for the success and expansion of a draughts player. Below are some profound aspects discussed about inquisitiveness and draughts:

Intrinsically important:

Inquisitiveness is regarded as a fundamental and intrinsic characteristic for draughts players, especially for those who wish to refine their abilities and elevate their game to a higher level. The thirst for knowledge enables draughts players to insatiably absorb new information and wisdom, challenging themselves and continually striving for improvement.

Profound study and analysis:

In the domain of draughts, there are a multitude of strategies, tactics, and openings that a player can learn and comprehend. The fervent inquisitiveness compels draughts players to delve into study materials such as books, videos, and analysis of games, with the aim of deepening their understanding of the game and discovering new techniques.

Unceasing growth and development:

Inquisitive draughts players demonstrate the courage to analyze their own games and performances, so they can emphasize their strengths and highlight weaknesses. They do not shy away from acknowledging their mistakes and learning from their experiences, leading to personal growth and development as players.

Mental flexibility:

Draughts reveals itself as a refined and complex mental game where creativity, strategic thinking, and problem-solving ability are crucial. Inquisitiveness offers draughts players the opportunity to promote their mental flexibility by exploring a variety of approaches and refining their thought processes.

The importance of knowledge sharing:

Inquisitive draughts players are often willing to share their knowledge and experiences with others, whether it be training with clubmates, participating in draughts tournaments, or analyzing online games with fellow players. Sharing knowledge not only promotes the understanding of the game but also contributes to a tighter draughts community.

Competitive advantage:

Inquisitiveness is an essential driving force for draughts players who have an unstoppable desire to keep learning and constantly adapt to ever-changing playing styles and trends. This tireless quest for knowledge and innovation gives them a considerable advantage in the game, allowing them to surpass and astonish their opponents.

In summary, inquisitiveness is like a torch that illuminates their path, an inexhaustible source of energy propelling them into the captivating and enigmatic universe of draughts. It grants them the privilege to triumph, to excel in the game that sets their soul on fire.

In 1973, the leader of the Royal Dutch Draughts Federation endorsed the words of chairman A. Los from the province of Drente, stating that Hans Jansen was a great talent and very inquisitive:

"Hans is a great talent. Perhaps not quite on the level of Sijbrands and Wiersma, but in a few years, he should be among the top ten players in the Netherlands. At this moment, he is certainly among the top thirty. Undoubtedly, he would excel in a Drents seniors championship. Hans simply has it, that was evident from the start. Harm Wiersma said so as well. His title is of great importance to the game of draughts in Drente."



Hans Jansen

1.21.1 Business:

Inquisitiveness reveals itself as an indispensable cornerstone in the lush realm of the business world, where individuals, entrepreneurs, and companies traverse a glorious path towards thriving and excelling in an endlessly swirling and ruthlessly

competitive business environment. The essence of this unparalleled characteristic is exposed in the following reasons why inquisitiveness inevitably deserves to be embraced as an indispensable elixir in the fabric of the business realm:

Innovation and competitive advantage:

In the endless dance of changes in the business world, the relentless importance of generating new ideas and creating visionary solutions emerges. The souls of the inquisitive wander constantly along the paths of new knowledge, unknown trends, and unleashed technologies, making them an inexhaustible source of innovation and enabling them to adapt with grace and agility to the ever-changing whims of the market.

Personal and professional growth:

The spark of inquisitiveness ignites an endless desire for continuous development and learning. By quenching their thirst for new skills and undiscovered knowledge, the driven ones can elevate their professional competencies to unprecedented heights, transforming themselves into the most precious jewels of their organizations.

Flexibility and adaptability: In the lush gardens of the inquisitive, a rare flower of flexibility and adaptability blooms. They easily accommodate unpredictable twists and unexpected challenges. As fearless explorers, they venture into new approaches and draw knowledge from the darkest valleys of adversity, making them indestructible in the storm of uncertainty.

Customer orientation:

In the enchanting oasis of a customer-centric market, understanding the desires and needs of customers is crucial. The thirst for knowledge of the inquisitive

makes the hearts of companies crave constant feedback, understand the capriciousness of market trends, and tailor their products and services to the ever-changing whims of customers.



Problem-solving and decision-making:

The source of wisdom surrounding inquisitive minds grants them a rich knowledge base and bestows upon them the ability to embrace multiple perspectives in their quest for the most brilliant decisions. Like skilled alchemists, they blend new information with ancient wisdom, ignite the flames of creativity, and forge stunning solutions for the most complex issues.

Leadership and inspiration:

Inquisitive leaders act as torchbearers for their teams and ignite the fire of ambition in the hearts of others. In the atmosphere of their presence, learning and development become nurturing forces, sowing the seed of motivation and engagement within the confines of their organizations.

All in all, inquisitiveness stands in the firmament of the business world as a valuable treasure, deeply rooted in the essence of innovation, growth, adaptability, and customer orientation. It embodies the vital key to thrive and flourish amid the challenging and dynamic storms of business circumstances.

1.22 Obsession

In the world of draughts, I have often encountered people who are completely obsessed with the game of draughts. This situation also occurs repeatedly in the world of chess. In order to play well or function in draughts, chess, or the business world, one must be passionate about the matter. Let me give the example here of the chess player Johan Barendregt.



Johan Barendregt, 1961
Photo: Jac. De Nijs/Anefo (Nationaal Archief)

The first Zeeland chess master and still the strongest player to this day was Prof. Johan Barendregt. He

was born in 1924 in Nieuwerkerk and passed away in 1982 in Amsterdam. Barendregt was one of the top chess players in the Netherlands for many years. In 1962, the world chess federation awarded him the title of international chess master. In the same year, he was appointed as a professor of clinical psychology at the University of Amsterdam. As a psychologist, Barendregt was ahead of his time. His views on intelligence and heredity faced a lot of resistance in the '70s and '80s. Nowadays, they are almost universally accepted. As a chess player, Barendregt always remained an amateur or (better) as they say in Flanders, an enthusiast. When he was thirteen, he started solving problems and playing correspondence chess. As he later said, he was obsessed with chess at that time, but fortunately, he never had big ambitions to become world champion or anything like that.

It is okay to be quietly obsessed with draughts and chess, as long as these mental sports are given up at the age of 18, because a professional career is more important than draughts and chess, from which only a few can make a living. Bobby Fischer was an example of what a chess player should not be: he defeated the Soviet hegemony, but was he happy in his personal life? Did he have friends? Other chess players who were obsessed with the board were Anand Vishy and Magnus Carlsen.

The six-time world draughts champion, Harm Wiersma, is not as passionate about draughts as the brilliant scientist Ton Sijbrands, who gets up and goes to bed with the draughts pieces. Wiersma says in this regard: "I'm not really obsessed with it. I need variety. Top sports are great, but be careful not to overdo it." But he admits at another time: "To play

draughts well, you actually need to be a little addicted to it."

Jannes van der Wal exuded obsession when it came to draughts. According to his own words, this was the case in 1976 when he became a professional draughts player, and to an even greater extent. At that time, he spent the whole day in his room and did nothing but engage in draughts. In this respect, the worst fanaticism was now somewhat behind him in 1980. When asked how long he intended to continue this life, he replied firmly, "My whole life!" He simply couldn't imagine anything else at the time. The determination and genius were indispensable for Jannes van der Wal, but just as important was the passionate obsession he showed for the things that interested him. First, it was draughts, then the piano and bridge, and later he fell in love with chess. In draughts, he became world champion, in bridge, he also finished third in a top-level national competition, and in chess, he also achieved unexpected results.

Even I took leave of competitive draughts at the age of 18 and focused entirely on studies and languages. Wiersma saw it very well that diversity is absolutely necessary: "One thing is important: if you do nothing but draughts, that is strongly discouraged. Then it works like a sort of drug, it numbs your mind.

That was very clear in 1991 for Paul Oudshoorn, who announced that he would not touch a draughts piece again after the tournament for the Dutch title. He thought it was enough to be a participant in the national draughts finals in Drachten. He lacked the obsession to engage with draughts day in and day out. "Even if I qualified for the World Championship, I wouldn't participate," he said at the time. "Three

and a half weeks of draughts, that's way too long," said the exhausted student from Amsterdam.

"Draughts is mentally exhausting. It narrows your mind in a way. Every day, you're in a different mood, it's always different. You have to try to adapt to it. A game of draughts is especially exhausting when the mind lacks clarity. Then it's exhausting."



Geert van Aalten, 1975
Photo: Hans Peters/Anefo (Nationaal Archief)

Rather unassuming was the international grandmaster from Huissen, Geert van Aalten. Draughts was in Van Aalten's nature. He developed into a great talent, but was equally obsessed with draughts. Van Aalten did little in the way of training and believed more in practical experience. Van Aalten played fast and easy. He won the youth world title in 1975.

1.22.1 Business

All people who succeed in life have one thing in common: they are passionate about their work. That was, for example, the case with the French mathematician Henri Poincaré. He not only showed interest in his work, he didn't just take it seriously, no, he was obsessed with it.



Henri Poincaré

That made his effort come to full fruition. Even in less talented individuals, this obsession works wonders. If they're not captivated by their work, they run a great risk of failing. Because it is all too true, as someone said one day: people fail not because they're stupid, but because they don't have enough heart for their work.

How can you become enthusiastic about your work? Philanthropist Sir Thomas Buxton gave this answer: "The longer I live," he said, "the more I am convinced that the great difference between the weak and the strong lies in their energy and the determination and straightness with which they pursue the goal."

People who are passionate about their work and generally successful often share several important traits that set them apart. Here are some of these common characteristics:

Passion:

Obsessed people have a deep, intrinsic passion for what they do. They feel deep satisfaction and excitement in their work, and this passion drives them to constantly seek improvement and excellence.

Devotion:

They are extremely devoted to their work and fully commit themselves to achieving their goals. They are not easily distracted and work hard to overcome obstacles.

Self-discipline:

Obsessed individuals often have a high degree of self-discipline. They are willing to control themselves, remain consistent, and take the necessary steps to achieve their goals, even if it means stepping out of their comfort zones.

Commitment:

They go beyond the basic requirements. They put in extra effort to excel and aim for perfection in their work. They are willing to go the extra mile.

Determination:

These people don't give up easily, even when faced with setbacks. They persist and work through difficult situations, determined to achieve their goals.

Focus:

Obsessed individuals have a keen sense of focus. They know what they want to accomplish and are not easily distracted by side issues or temporary trends. They focus on their goals and work steadily in that direction.



Self-motivation:

They have the internal drive and motivation to push themselves constantly. They don't need constant external motivation because they are intrinsically motivated to succeed.

Willingness to learn:

Obsessed individuals are often willing to learn continuously and improve themselves. They take criticism seriously, remain open to new ideas, and constantly seek ways to develop their skills.

Time management:

They understand the value of time and can plan and organize effectively. They can prioritize and work efficiently.

Persistence:

Obsession can help deal with setbacks and failures. People with strong dedication don't give up easily and work to achieve their goals, even when things get tough.

In essence, it is crucial to find a healthy balance between being passionate about business goals and maintaining overall well-being, both professionally and personally. Obsession can be a valuable tool, but it must be managed carefully to maximize the positive aspects and minimize the negative effects.

1.23 Perception

The cosmic significance of perception on the checkered fields of the draughtboard cannot be emphasized enough, as it is the interweaving of perplexity and explosiveness that elevates this game to a captivating symphony of strategy and unparalleled decision-making. It is like a cosmic dance of variables, a universe in which perception has ignited a vital supernova of intelligence.

The draughtboard reveals its intrinsic complexity, a cosmic ballet of pieces dancing on a matrix of possibilities. Perception acts as a prism of clarity, revealing the parallel universes of moves and countermoves, a multi-headed hydra of possibilities intricately connected to one another.

A skilled draughts player must think ahead and predict the future on the board, visualize the stellar traces of moves, and grasp the dance of consequences. The explosiveness of perception unleashes a whirlwind of information, a spectacular supernova of processing speed, enabling the draughts player to quickly grasp and assimilate all cosmic data.

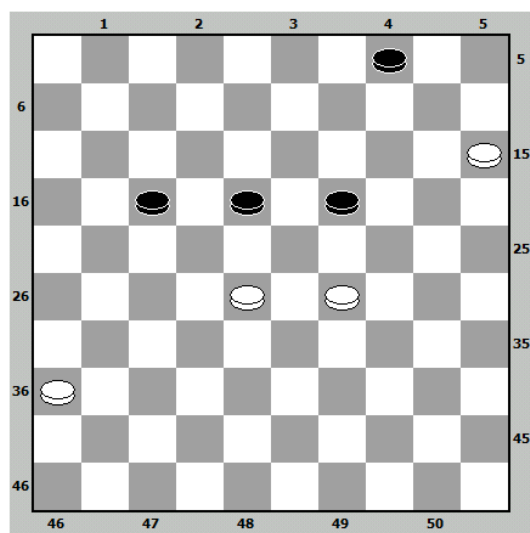
Perception acts as a celestial observatory, where the draughts player unveils cosmic patterns. It is a source of radiant knowledge, illuminating patterns and tactics woven through the cosmos of the draughtboard. A gifted draughts player uses their perception to fathom these patterns, absorbing them like a black hole of insight, a dark matter of tactical understanding.

In the cosmic dance of the draughts game, perception is the throbbing heart of intelligence, the supernova of insight that can make the difference between triumph and downfall. It is the cosmic unity of perplexity and explosiveness that elevates the draughts player to the status of a fearless astronaut, navigating the universe of possibilities with an unwavering grasp of the draughtboard.

In short, perception is the key to the cosmic treasure trove of draughts, a universal force that empowers the draughts player to comprehend the board, develop cosmic strategies, and lead the cosmic dance of thoughtful decisions. It is a cosmic big bang of intelligence that can make the difference between an average draughts player and a glorious cosmic conqueror in the universe of the draughtboard.

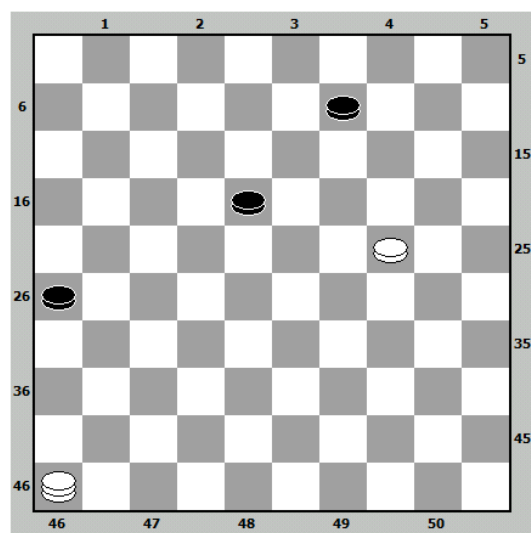
Yet, even in the case of the best grandmasters, perception can wane during a game. And here, I want to discuss a position from the game Springer - Rustenburg that arose in the World Championship match in Amsterdam in 1928. Rustenburg, playing with the black pieces, played 19-24 and lost the game, although he could still have achieved a draw. It was typical in those years that many strong draughts players overlooked this drawing game.

This drawing variation was later noticed by Jac de Haas, the former champion of the Netherlands.

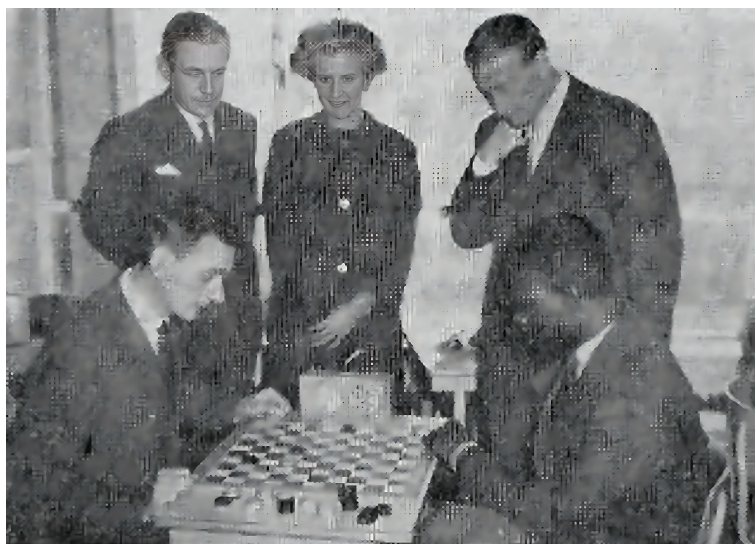


The drawing variation for black is as follows: 1... 17-21 2. 36-31 4-10! 3. 15x4 21-26

In 1963/1964, I participated in the youth group of the Brinta tournament, which, according to the newspapers, included three prodigies: Ton Sijbrands, Harm Wiersma, and Andreas Kuijken. I felt stronger than Kuijken and was clearly winning against him, but the clever Andreas managed to secure a draw. Therefore, the term prodigy did not apply to Andreas in my opinion. However, it did apply to Harm Wiersma and Ton Sijbrands, both of whom defeated me soundly. At that time, I witnessed the game between the Senegalese player Baba Sy (playing as white) and Wim de Jong (playing as black). Before the final round, the former Dutch champion had 16 points, and the African player had 15 points. De Jong could have won the tournament with a draw.



In this position, Baba Sy played 24-19, and Wim de Jong, known as a fighter, resigned the game. He seemed to be affected by the result.



Wim de Jong against Baba Sy

Thanks to this fortunate victory, Baba became the winner of the tournament. The perception of De Jong and his usual fighting spirit had failed. As for the failed perception, this also occurred with other draughts players. No one saw that the game was actually a draw after 24-19, and this was noticed much later by the Frenchman Michel Hisard and the Dutchman Gerrit Arend Cremer.

After 24-19, black can secure a draw with 26-31, 46-32 (on 19-13, 18-23! and 31-37), 31-36 (not immediately 18-23 and 9-14), 32-37, 18-23, 19x28, 9-14, 28-23, 14-20, 23-19, 20-25, 19-13, 25-30, 13-8, 30-34, 8-2, 34-39, 2-16, 36-41, 37x46, and 39-44 - a draw. White could have won by playing 46-37 first and then advancing the piece 24 to king.

1.23.1 Business

In the dynamic game of business life, perception plays a crucial symphony of importance. It forms the link between gathering valuable information, understanding the business environment, and making thoughtful decisions. Here, amidst a myriad of concepts, we elevate the importance of perception to unprecedented heights of complexity and variation.

Information gathering: As a valuable beacon of light, perception enables entrepreneurs and business leaders to collect valuable data about the market, customers, competitors, trends, and business

opportunities. This information acts as fuel to forge strategies and make focused decisions.

"Worldly" Environmental Awareness: Perception acts as a sensitive telescope through which business people can be aware of the swirling changes in the business environment. It allows them to maneuver through new developments and trends and respond with determination to the evolution of the business landscape.



Customer-Centric Deep-Rooted Insight: By keenly observing and listening to customers, businesses can unravel the deep-rooted compass of their loyal customers' desires. This enables them to seamlessly align their products and services with customer wishes, letting customer satisfaction shine like a sparkling star.

Competition Analysis: The keen observation of rival companies is akin to deciphering secret codes. It reveals competitors' strategies and positioning in the

vast universe of the market. This empowers businesses to identify their own unique competitive advantage and shine as a standout star amidst the business landscape.

Risk Management: The careful observation and identification of potential risks and threats enable businesses to arm themselves against challenges and effectively control them. Anticipating problems helps them take preventive measures and bravely navigate uncharted territories.

Decision-Making Process: Sharp perception ignites a storm of valuable data and insights, resulting in a superior compass for decision-making. It provides business people with the insight to navigate the vast world of business with a strategy based on factual information and glittering trends.

Innovation: Perception illuminates new business opportunities and trends, which can lead to unprecedented ideas and product developments. It enables businesses to constantly adapt to changing needs and circumstances, like true visionaries of innovation.

In summary, it helps businesses continually adapt to changing needs and circumstances as true innovators in the dynamic landscape of business existence. It is the sparkling star that ensures adaptation to changes, which is crucial for shining as a successful enterprise in a competitive business landscape.

1.24 Perseverance

Entrepreneurs are characterized by their perseverance. The more important something is to you, the easier it is to persevere. It may sometimes seem that entrepreneurs have more energy than the average person, but that's not the case. They channel their energy by making their important motives and goals their focus. As a result, combined with their immense curiosity, they achieve a great deal in a short amount of time, whether individually or as a team.

Willpower is the ability to take action, to get started. It is the launch, the first step towards doing something.

Perseverance is the ability to continue after that initial launch.

In the game of checkers, I learned to make decisions, and I was certain that I would succeed in the future. At a younger age, I studied psychology and often stood in front of the mirror, saying 20 times a day, "I was born for success." That was always in my mind. And that mirror has already worked wonders on multiple occasions.

Even Winston Churchill, one of the most charismatic figures of the 20th century, practiced his speaking style in front of the mirror.

I regarded setbacks as a normal part of climbing higher and I also learned from checkers not to give up easily but to keep fighting. I had tremendous perseverance as a result.

And I thought of Walt Disney, who was fired because he didn't have enough ideas, yet he went on to build Disneyland despite facing multiple bankruptcies.



Draughts players have great perseverance

From a neuroscience perspective, it reveals why we feel the way we feel and behave the way we behave. It's enlightening, especially regarding the fact that as humans, we tend to attribute our behavior to external causes, while in reality, the root causes of our behavior lie in our biological DNA, biochemistry, and our upbringing from 0 to 8 years old. I never knew that this paradigm, which was shaped 80% during my youth, determines the lens through which I view the world and myself in the mirror.

In his championship match of checkers against Jannes van der Wal in 1983, Harm Wiersma ultimately played 20 games. There is no doubt that Wiersma had tremendous perseverance during that time, driven by his self-confidence and motivation. After the match, he remarked:

“You always have to try to stay motivated,” said Wiersma, “and that requires perseverance. I said on a radio program with Felix Meurders that I would win on Thursday, and I was right.”

Those who possess perseverance serve as shining examples, inspiring others to also walk the path of determination and perseverance. They show that with unwavering dedication, there are virtually no limits to what we can achieve. Perseverance is an inner engine that keeps driving us even when the world around us is doubtful or sceptical.

Developing perseverance requires resilience, patience and an unwavering belief in ourselves. It requires us to stick to our vision even when others discourage us or try to disrupt our path. Perseverance is a journey of self-discovery and inner growth, where we push our limits, sharpen our skills and maximise our abilities.

Perseverance allows us to transform ourselves from dreamers to doers, from aspirants to achievers. It enables us to mobilise our inner strength, overcome setbacks and prove to ourselves that we are capable of great achievements. Perseverance is the fire that fuels our desire, motivates us to keep going and ultimately experience the satisfaction of achieving what we have set for ourselves. In this way, we achieve success in the draughts tournaments, in

business, and the achievements in our careers and in academia do not stop there.

So let us nurture, feed and cultivate our perseverance. Let us embrace challenges, face setbacks and cling to our vision, knowing that each step forward brings us closer to our ultimate success and fulfilment. With perseverance as our faithful companion, we can move mountains, challenge impossibilities and illuminate our life paths with radiant triumphs and deep personal satisfaction.

1.24.1 Business

"Perseverance" reveals its unmistakable manifestation in the business realm, imbued with an aura of crucial significance and an explosion of determination. It is a cosmic force rooted in the core of entrepreneurship, passionately intertwining itself with the foundation of success. Let us immerse ourselves in the kaleidoscope of this enigmatic trait, guided by the sublime complexity of perplexity and the fiery cadence of reventazón.

Overcoming Challenges In the cosmos of business transactions, cosmic obstacles and dark contrasts inevitably arise. With a splendid power of perseverance, intrepid entrepreneurs and employees rise to defy these cosmic challenges, embraced by an indomitable will that propels them forward, even when galaxies in the universe of difficulties seem to fade. The inner supernova of determination reveals

the secrets of solutions and shines as a bright star, indispensable to the success that beckons them.

Achieving Goals

In the melodies of business endeavors, goals sing like celestial constellations, illuminated by the glow of perseverance. Perseverance grants them the otherworldly power to tirelessly travel through the dark cosmic chasms of challenges, while aiming their course at the unreachable stars of success. An unwavering comet persists in the vast universe, guided by a volitional drive to break through galactic boundaries and bask in the glowing light of accomplished goals.



Innovation and Growth

In the cosmic dance of competition, perseverance carries the torch of inspiration. It unleashes boundless creative energy that fills the void with sparkling ideas and the budding seeds of progress. In the epic symphony of development and expansion, perseverance keeps the fiery flames of experiments burning as they explore undiscovered cosmic realms, seeking new worlds of triumph and transformation.

Customer Relations

The universe of customer relations requires cosmic patience and steadfast determination. Perseverance guides the traveler in the depths of interactions and provides them with the keys to decipher complex constellations of problems. In the vastness of empathy and care, perseverance builds a bridge between worlds and strengthens the ties between customers and their cosmic companions.

Building Trust

The foundations of trust rest upon cosmic pillars of consistency and perseverance. Perseverance shines as an illuminating star in the sky, dispelling the darkness of doubt and establishing an indestructible credibility. Striking a golden balance between intentions and actions, perseverance builds a bridge to trust and creates a powerful magnetic attraction between cosmic entities.

Resilience in Times of Crisis

In the unpredictable maelstroms of cosmic crises, perseverance glows as an untamed firestorm. It withstands the pressure of decline and, with a resonating rhythm of resilience, rebuts the forces of resistance and chaos. A tireless astral warrior, clad in the armor of unwaveringness, guides others through the dark passages of turbulence toward the light of recovery and rebirth.

Inspiration for Others

In the cosmic community, perseverance acts as a shining beacon of inspiration. It illuminates the path of fellow travelers as they continue their journey through the vastness of business challenges. A brilliant comet of perseverance, soaring in the firmament of determination, encourages others to

discover their inner stars and weave together the stellar future that awaits them.

In conclusion, perseverance is the invisible quintessence in the business world that propels individuals and organizations like a cosmic force, inspiring them to innovate, grow, and ultimately achieve triumph, even when the melodies of challenges resonate in the cosmic choir. It is a masterful symphony of steadfastness that can make the difference between galactic defeats and triumphant glories in the competitive universe of business greatness.

1.25 Physical Condition

The desired physical condition of a draughts player is an intriguing and perplexing puzzle. Draughts is considered a mental sport, where physical exertion rarely plays a role, unlike sports such as running or football. It's an explosion of contradictions! Although it may seem that the body doesn't matter, a draughts player still requires a certain level of physical health to optimize their performance. A true labyrinth of ideas!

In this maze, we encounter some enigmatic aspects of physical condition that might be relevant to a draughts player. Good overall health is essential to remain mentally and physically alert during the intense mental challenges of draughts. A tangle of nutrition, sleep, and physical exercise forms the basis of the draughts universe.

During the matches, many draughts players are very nervous. There are draughtsmen who turn red and others almost have their carotid artery burst. However, there are also draughts players who can completely control their nerves and have nerves of steel.

Notably, there is endurance! While draughts is a sitting activity, it can be a marathon duel that lasts for hours. The draughts player must possess a mysterious reservoir of endurance to stay sharp and focused during endless draughts tournaments.

Aha! Concentration and focus are undoubtedly mental attributes, but their connection to physical condition is like a bright flash of light in a dark sky.

Could regular physical exercise and healthy eating really be the key to dispelling the mists of confusion?

Ah, but there's more! Stress management enters the stage, and draughts transforms into a mysterious dance of tension and release. Can good physical condition truly help navigate the tumultuous ocean of stress and promote mental well-being?

It almost seems surreal, but even seating posture is a true point of contention in the world of draughts! While draughts players sit for hours around a table, a proper seating posture can act as a magical formula to dispel physical discomfort and fatigue. Who would have thought?

How bizarre, physical health appears to dance with mental acrobatics in the mind of the draughts player! However, it is clear that while physical condition plays a supportive role, the true magic of draughts lies in developing strong mental skills: strategic thinking, concentration, calculation, and the ability to analyze complex situations. A dizzying truth!

Harm Wiersma noticed early on that one needs to be in good physical condition for playing draughts at a high level. Body and mind are one. During the Dutch championship in 1988, Ton Sijbrands started very well with 7 points out of the first four games. Afterwards, the former world champion experienced a physical setback and struggled towards the end of the first tournament week. There were players who didn't smoke or drink, and some of them were also involved in running, giving them a level of fitness Sijbrands could only dream of. For instance, Jannes van der Wal had no trouble running 10 km in no time.



Jannes van der Wal
World champion, 1982

Even then, it was evident in the world of draughts that things had changed, and young players were highly committed to their physical condition. Harm Wiersma's physical condition in 1991 was not much better than Ton Sijbrands', as he humorously and with a generous laugh, admitted when thinking of his match with Tsjizjov:

"I realized recently that it wouldn't hurt to do something for my physical condition. But when I wanted to go jogging, I found out that I didn't even have a tracksuit and a pair of sneakers. I bought them, but it didn't look particularly good. Besides, I bought the wrong shoe size. So, Tsjizjov doesn't have to worry about my physical condition."

However, it turned out to be all quite manageable. For many years, Wiersma was an enthusiastic practitioner of karate, speaking with enthusiasm about his training sessions with well-trained bearers of the brown belt from the police. This indeed requires both excellent physical condition and a great mastery of both body and mind. It's not about landing the blow, but about stopping at the right moment. The sound mind of mind sport players doesn't always come in a healthy and actively conditioned body. Among the top checkers and chess players, Wiersma distinguished himself at that time by striving for harmony between mind and body.

1.25.1 Business

But what about venturing into the realm of the international businessman? Are the requirements for his physical condition equally strange and elusive? Is it a sudden explosion of colors and contrasts?

An international businessman may not experience the same physical exhaustion as some other demanding professions, but the path to success is riddled with mysterious physical requirements. It's a journey through a labyrinth of expectations!

Like a circus artist, the businessman must have good overall health to withstand the spinning wheels of constant travel and hectic work schedules. The symphony of success sounds harmonious in a healthy body, brimming with energy and resilience to diseases.

Ah, and there's endurance! The grueling travels, the devastating jetlags, and always being ready for a variety of business meetings. It almost seems like an impossible performance! Yet a true businessman possesses a mysterious reservoir of endurance to resist fatigue and remain alert even in the most challenging moments.

Stress management enters as an inevitable acrobat onto the stage, a fascinating display of balance and harmony. The business world is a true snake pit of stress, but the art of stress management empowers the businessman to stay calm and productive even in the most intense moments.



And how to navigate the capricious currents of international cultures and customs? Only the most flexible and adaptable minds can navigate through these opaque waters. It seems like an almost impossible balancing act, but the businessman is like a masterful dancer, effortlessly adapting to every environment.

But beware! Presentation and grooming also take the stage, a true display of professionalism and elegance. A businessman is like an artist of impressions, dressed in perfection and exuding confidence.

Yet the journey becomes truly fascinating when we venture into the realm of international business travel and the exotic meals offered by mysterious clients. It's like an exploding fireworks show of flavors and scents!

The world of food hygiene enters as a captivating dance of caution. Different countries have different standards, and one must be a seasoned detective, being cautious and consuming only fresh and well-prepared food to avoid unexpected dangers.

It seems like a race against time! One cannot always refuse the food offered by clients, but one must be wise and moderate in their choices. Like a tightrope walker, one must avoid overeating heavy or high-calorie foods to prevent fatigue and discomfort.

But amidst this surreal scenario, it's essential to stay hydrated! Water, like a refreshing oasis in the desert, must never be forgotten. Choose wisely in countries where tap water is a risky dance partner and bottled water is the safest choice.

Ah, and let's not forget about dietary preferences! A businessman with specific dietary restrictions must be a skilled communication artist. It is possible to engage in refined negotiations with clients, making them aware of these special culinary desires. The world of dietary preferences seems like a captivating balancing act!

Ah, the hidden secrets of physical condition in the world of the draughts player and the international businessman are like a whirlwind of colorful surprises! It's a true odyssey of challenges and triumphs, where the physical and mental spheres harmoniously merge. ¡A breathtaking performance that leaves us in awe!

1.26 Promoting Creativity

In the world of draughts (also known as checkers), there are players who display remarkable creativity. One such player is former world champion Harm Wiersma, a childhood friend in the draughts arena since 1963. Wiersma is renowned in the draughts community as a game innovator. It is well understood that a grandmaster seeks to introduce the unprecedented, the "New," relying on their creativity. His creative prowess and associated attributes were recognized early on by former world champion Piet Roozenburg, who declared in 1970 that he held Harm Wiersma in higher regard than Ton Sijbrands:

"When Wiersma sits behind the board, he forgets everything around him. He is a fighter. Sijbrands doesn't always convince me that he is fully focused. At times, he plays on his routine during simultaneous exhibitions. Wiersma doesn't. He engages in competitive matches. He always brings something new. During the first meeting of the youth draughts association, Wiersma played a clock session, a novel match format, against sixteen players. He won thirteen, and the remaining games ended in draws. These were all magnificent games, soon to be published. Wiersma is handicapped in all aspects by his studies at the HAVO (secondary education). He aims to become a headmaster. I would love to see him dedicate all his time to draughts, like the Russian top players. He recently won the Sugar Tournament with Sijbrands, but he never has the assurance of becoming number one. That would be the case if he could dedicate all his time to draughts. He is stronger than world champion Andreiko. Overall – game skill, creativity, and related matters – he has more potential than Sijbrands."

Roozenburg then added with remarkable finesse: "Sijbrands probably won't find this statement very pleasing, but I have my own opinion."



Harm Wiersma, Piet Roozenburg and Ton Sijbrands, 1967

In the same article, it became clear that Sijbrands disagreed with Roozenburg, as he immediately noticed the unproven nature of Roozenburg's arguments. Two years later, Harm Wiersma himself talked about his creativity when he stated:

"Sijbrands and I turned draughts into a sport with significant publicity value back then. A match between us should still take place at some point. Even without money, just for the honor. The clash between his library knowledge and my creativity. Just to make a shout. It would reinvigorate the draughts world."

In those years, Harm Wiersma possessed remarkable creativity that served him well in both draughts and business. While he couldn't always leverage his creativity to his advantage, this quality commanded great respect. In his match against Wiersma, which he won 22-18 in 1994, Alexei Tsizjov remarked:

"This was my toughest match so far, yes, tougher than the one against Ton Sijbrands (1989, 20-20). Harm is not stronger but more dangerous than Ton. It's always surprising what he does. In that regard, he's comparable to Maradona. I didn't have a clear advantage in this match. But Harm had to adapt his style in many games to mine."



Harm Wiersma, European champion 1999

Pl		Naam	Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	We	Wi	Re	Ve	Pt	SB
1		Harm Wiersma	GMI 2404	X	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	1	2	2	15	8	7	0	23	321
2		Ton Sijbrands		1	X	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	15	7	8	0	22	310
		Guntis Valneris	GMI 2427	1	1	X	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	15	7	8	0	22	292
4		Edvard Buzinskij	GMI 2341	1	0	1	X	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	15	7	7	1	21	275
		Anatoli Gantvarg	GMI 2381	0	1	1	1	X	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	15	7	7	1	21	270
6		Alexander Getmanski	GMI 2345	0	1	1	1	1	X	0	1	1	2	0	1	2	2	1	2	15	4	8	3	16	211
7		Igor Kirzner	MI 2346	0	0	0	0	1	2	X	1	1	0	2	1	1	2	2	2	15	5	5	5	15	176
		Alexander Georgiev	GMI 2389	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	X	2	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	15	4	7	4	15	184
		Rob Clerc	GMI 2388	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	X	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	15	2	11	2	15	209
10		Arnaud Cordier	MI 2335	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	X	1	2	0	1	1	2	15	3	7	5	13	167
		Raoul Bubbi	MI 2274	1	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	X	1	1	1	1	2	15	2	9	4	13	177
12		Ronald Schallej	MF 2216	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	X	1	1	2	2	15	2	7	6	11	135
13		Eldar Aliev		0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	1	1	X	1	0	1	15	1	8	6	10	132
14		Piotr Chmiel	MF 2214	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	X	1	1	15	0	9	6	9	120
15		Maks Shavel	MI 2245	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	2	1	X	1	15	1	6	8	8	92
16		Kaido Leemann	MI 2258	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	X	15	0	6	9	6	79

With such a significant achievement, more than one draughts player at that time must have recalled the words that Rob Clerc once said about Wiersma in 1983, which were more or less as follows:

"However, I would like to emphasize that since 1977, Harm has not managed to win any major tournaments. He last secured the national champion title that year, although he participated a few times after that. His world championship title is solely thanks to the match games. He never achieves victories in regular tournaments. Essentially, you can only consider Harm a world champion in match games. In this regard, someone like Karpov lends much more credibility to his chess title through his performances, which he achieves in regular tournaments as well. Therefore, I think it's worth considering whether Wiersma refrains from participating in the national championship only for financial reasons."

1.26.1 Business

Draughts players can undoubtedly develop creativity that holds value in the business world. Playing draughts demands strategic thinking, planning, and the ability to consider different moves and scenarios – all of which are transferable skills in a business context. Here are some ways in which the creativity developed by draughts players can be valuable in the business world:

Strategic Thinking: The ability to think several moves ahead and anticipate opponents' moves is ingrained in the DNA of draughts players. This skill of strategic thinking can seamlessly apply to the business world, where long-term planning and informed decision-making are crucial.

Problem-Solving: Creative problem-solving is second nature to draughts players. They burst with imaginative solutions to escape tricky situations and identify the most effective moves that lead them to victory. This ability can be instrumental in addressing business challenges and devising innovative solutions to obstacles.

Critical Thinking: Draughts players must critically assess various move options and analyze the potential consequences of each move. This critical thinking ability is valuable in evaluating business opportunities, analyzing risks, and making informed decisions.

Adaptability: The unpredictability of the draughts game often requires players to adapt to changing circumstances and novel situations. This adaptability is equally useful in the business environment, where coping with change and unexpected challenges is frequent.

Creative Strategies: Winning a draughts game sometimes demands devising creative and unconventional strategies to outmaneuver opponents. This skill translates into crafting unique business strategies and approaches to outpace competitors.

Perseverance: Draughts players frequently engage in prolonged and challenging matches, where patience and persistence are essential to secure victory. The indomitable spirit exhibited by draughts players is equally valuable in the business realm, where resilience and tenacity in the face of setbacks are highly regarded.

While draughts itself may not directly prepare one for business success, the skills and attributes cultivated by draughts players – such as strategic thinking, problem-solving, and creativity – undoubtedly contribute to thriving in the business world.

A compelling example of a draughts player's creativity being leveraged in the business world is found in the persona of Harm Wiersma.

Experience has shown that Piet Roozenburg's statements were fully justified, as Wiersma was indeed a draughts player with exceptional creative qualities. In 1990, his company was named "Personal Creativity" and primarily focused on mediation and trade with the Soviet Union. According to Wiersma, the company was named so due to his personal creativity. During that time, Wiersma had already visited the Soviet Union about 20 times, many for business purposes. Thanks to his recognizable face, he began achieving business successes in that vast country. He returned from Moscow, where around thirty Dutch gambling machines helped the top draughts player with extra "coins." Wiersma stated:

"I set that up with a few partners. Indeed, there is certainly a foundation of trust among the older Russians who engage in mind sports because they recognize your face. And they are often the decision-makers... I have business support points in Minsk and Riga. I hope to open an office in Moscow soon. But it's very expensive there. Western investors are working to establish a casino in Moscow, and they are using me as a contact."



Harm Wiersma in those years

In one of his articles about Harm Wiersma, André Jansen accompanied Harm Wiersma to Russia to set up casino projects there. Harm Wiersma had been a known figure to Jansen for years, with many common friends, visiting his Holland Casino multiple times, along with his illustrious contemporaries. According to Jansen, as a multiple-time world draughts champion, Harm Wiersma was a familiar figure throughout the former Soviet Union. In 1991, they visited Mayor Anatoli Sobtsjak of Leningrad/Saint Petersburg for a purpose. During their meeting, Sobtsjak also introduced Wiersma and Jansen to his deputy. The goal of the meeting was to conduct a feasibility study for the city and invite

internationally operating casino organizations to submit offers to St. Petersburg. Harm had such good relationships in Russia that this was truly realistic. He spoke fluent Russian and was, according to Jansen, a celebrity in the country!

1.27 Psychology

Arnold van der Kammen once wrote an interesting story about the psychology of chess players in his blog, and I will summarize some points here:

Emanuel Lasker already said it: "It's not the wooden pieces that fight on the chessboard, but the players." During the game, both players try, among other things, to gain an advantage, trap the opponent, or mislead the opponent with a "waiting move." The ultimate goal is, of course, to win the game. With every move that can be made, there are always one or more strong moves. However, a weak move can gain a significant role in the game due to the psychological power it carries. A player doesn't understand the move, suspects a blunder, but something nags at them. What makes their opponent play the move?

Body language reveals a lot in such moments. Does a player make a weak move and then start sighing, groaning, moaning, cursing themselves, etc.? Then the opponent knows that according to their opponent, a mistake has been made. If the player remains without any emotion and calmly writes down the move, psychology comes into play again. Questions arise: "Is it really a weak move?" "What is the plan?" These are two questions that take a lot of time to think over the board and calculate.

In the past, I had studied psychology at some academy and therefore knew a bit about human behavior. I am still convinced that psychology also plays a role in the world of checkers and that a good training partner can indeed have a favorable

psychological influence on the player's morale. In this regard, I recall during a business trip when I came across a Dutch newspaper. In those years, I had to undertake many foreign trips for my Spanish company, where I worked as a co-owner among eight professors. I had developed the habit of traveling on Saturdays, as I could then rest on Sunday to appear fresh to the clients on Monday morning. At the airport, I always bought De Telegraaf and thus became aware of the events in the Netherlands.

In the newspaper, I saw that a match was underway between challenger Harm Wiersma and world champion Anatoly Gantwarg, in which after 13 games, Harm was still tied at 13-13 after 13 draw games. Since I considered Wiersma a fantastic draughts player, I was naturally disappointed by the result, and I decided to call him at the Hotel Hilton in Rotterdam. I was lucky, and I got through to Harm himself soon, which I found strange. I had expected a coach. That's how I found out that the match was now at 14-14 with 14 draw games. I obviously don't remember exactly what I said to Harm, but the strange thing was that Harm won the 15th game after that. He was probably so surprised by my call - we hadn't spoken to each other for 18 years - that it had a positive effect on him. During that conversation, Harm's positive thoughts went back to 1963 when we played against each other in the Brinta Youth Tournament and he would beat me in a brilliant way, just like Maurice Raichenbach would beat Herman de Jongh once, with beautiful threats and piece gains, and then claim the game. It was a sensation in the world of checkers at that time. That Brinta Youth Tournament was won by another brilliant player, Ton Sijbrands. It might have all been a coincidence, but Wiersma would win his 15th game the next day (Sunday) after our conversation against Gantwarg,

and another coincidence is that a long and beautiful article about this game was written by... Ton Sijbrands.

Of course, I had only called Harm to tell him that I wanted to see him win for once and that he was certainly capable of it. It would be a psychological moment for Harm, that phone call. For those who don't believe this story, they should ask Harm themselves. Due to my psychological studies in those years, I quickly came to the conclusion that at this high level, grandmasters need psychological support in matches; grandmasters are also only humans! Harm's victory in the 15th game came just in time:

With the handshake that Gantwarg gave his opponent yesterday afternoon at four o'clock as a sign of surrender, a sigh of relief went through the entire Dutch checkers community. For three weeks, people here have been waiting for this! Fourteen consecutive draws had raised the tension considerably, especially because in the last games it became increasingly clear that Wiersma was delivering the stronger play of this duo. Everyone wished for a Dutch victory, but it did not materialize, and thus, day by day, the danger of 20-20 through exclusively draws increased. With that final score, Gantwarg would retain his title as reigning world champion.

In his book "Psychology of the Chess Player" (1956), Ruben Fine demonstrates that the most significant difference between an amateur and a master lies in the ability to remember and then recognize the various patterns or themes that emerge during a game. He compares this ability to mastering a language. Burt Hochberg and Grandmaster Pal Benko discuss the psychological aspects of chess in their book "Winning with Chess Psychology" (1991). They delve into the weaknesses of various grandmasters, indicating that once an opponent's weaknesses are known, one can tactically exploit

them. Many attributes related to chess, including draughts, are extensively covered in the book "Practical Chess Psychology" (2002) by the Israeli psychologist FM Atmazia Avni. Another interesting book is by Harry Wienigk, "Enzyklopaedie Mittelspielmuster. Elektronisches Schach-Labor" (1987), which informs us that disciplined learning work causes a person to transform themselves, and concentrated practice leads to more stable and active thinking. Constructively dealing with losses and setbacks is simply the precursor to later success. The most captivating aspect of all this is that international master Jesper Hall had practical experience as a player and trainer in Sweden, which he expressed in his 2001 book: "Chess Training for Budding Champions. A Unique Self-training Course in the Essentials of Chess." Overcoming weaknesses and further developing strengths are essential for success, according to Reinhard Munzert, who discusses various psychological aspects of chess, including draughts, in his book "Schach-psychologie" (1998).

In the world of draughts, Russian player Andris Andreiko was known for his psychological tricks, which he used many times. However, he always made sure that he never did anything against the rules.

Koeperman was in severe time trouble, Andreiko less so, but he deliberately increased his opponent's nervousness by pressing the clock forcefully after his moves, a technique known in draughts terms. A player in time trouble becomes agitated, and their nerves are put to a severe test. When the opponent intensifies this mental state by, in this case, tapping the clock, it inevitably contributes to undermining morale.

Psychology always played a significant role in Andreiko's approach. Anyone who closely observed him in the KSH tournament in Hoogezand must have been even more convinced. More than his displayed game, it was the self-assuredness and self-awareness that emanated from him that left an impression.

The reporter I. Anderson said of Andreiko that he was young, physically strong, and robustly healthy. He played quickly and easily, which meant that he never showed signs of fatigue during a game or in a long and grueling tournament. He was cunning and an excellent psychologist. Andreiko constantly sought to incorporate psychological elements into his game. He could suddenly utter a few words and then make various gestures towards different pieces without actually touching them, all seemingly with the aim of hypnotizing his opponent and leading them to make specific moves. This tactic was particularly successful when he himself was in time trouble. Andreiko was extremely self-assured and a great actor.

At times, however, Andreiko went too far, and his reputation suffered when he deceived his opponent Harm Wiersma, who was only 14 years old at the time, due to time trouble in 1967. In time trouble, Wiersma did not record his moves, which was not mandatory in such a case. Andreiko did record his moves. Wiersma saw on Andreiko's notation sheet that 50 moves had been played, and then his flag fell. Andreiko then went to the tournament director and claimed that Wiersma's flag had fallen on the 49th move. This turned out to be correct. Cleverly, Andreiko had deliberately noted an extra move, and young Harm fell into the trap.

Of course, Wiersma learned from this unfortunate experience and also applied a psychological trick in his game against Clerc for the world championship in draughts in 1974:

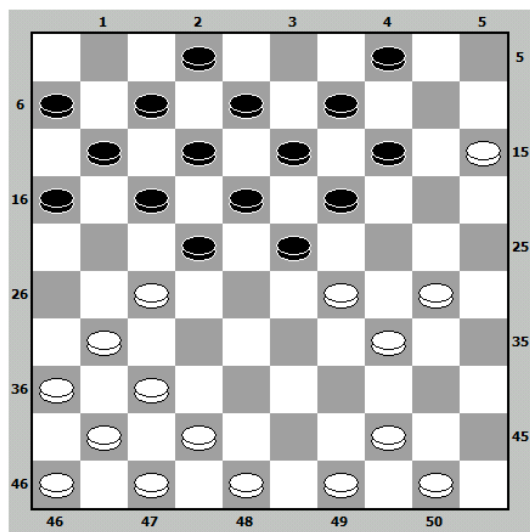
After the fifty-move rule had already passed, Wiersma continued to play quickly to give Clerc, who could not keep up with the notation, the impression that there was still a time pressure. This trick worked wonders: on the fifty-second move, Clerc made a serious error and ended up in a lost endgame.

Andreiko was not only an exceptionally strong tournament player, but he also became known for his psychological strategies, something entirely new in the world of draughts in 1967. He was somewhat lost in his game against the American Jerry Leclair. Then Andreiko resorted to psychological intimidation tactics, which earned him a draw. He was even more unsportsmanlike against the French draughts player Georges Mostovoy. The position was a clear draw, but Andreiko played for hours and waited for a mistake from Mostovoy. After 7 hours of play, it finally happened: Mostovoy made a mistake, and Andreiko could record a win on the score sheet. For a chess player witnessing all this, Andreiko was simply a healthy player who put into practice what chess players did years ago. The philosopher Lasker claimed that chess (and, of course, draughts as well) is a personal battle between two individuals, and all means that do not go beyond the rules may be employed.

Once, Andreiko played against a draughts player from Curaçao, a somewhat pitiable man with one leg. Andreiko was in a bad position. He began pressing the clock button harder and then started shaking his fists in a display of agitation. His opponent became increasingly flustered, made foolish moves, and lost

the game. Andreiko also liked to stare intently at his opponents, hit the clock forcefully during time pressure, and even made a habit of standing behind someone's chair and wobbling it. And when he walked! Andreiko wore creaky shoes. People would be deep in thought, and suddenly that creaking sound, you could hear Andreiko coming from 20 meters away. The goal was to provoke irritation in the opponent. Another example of extreme misbehavior by Andreiko was intentionally knocking over a glass of milk. He did this once in a bad position when his opponent was in time trouble. Obviously, this goes too far, as the game should be won on the board.

Andris Andreiko's psychological performance against the entirely unknown and aforementioned American Jerry Leclair in 1967 in Hoogezaand became world-famous and deserves further explanation.



Leclair, playing with white, played 44-40, and Andreiko would always lose a piece. 17-21 was

prevented by 30-24, 29-24, and 37x10. Leclair declined his offer of a draw, and then Andreiko started his psychological games. First, he pretended to think for 70 minutes and then played 23-28, sacrificing a piece. Then he waited again for 40 minutes before making his next move, 12-18, and finally had a few minutes left for the remaining 20 moves. When it was Leclair's turn, Andreiko continuously tapped his fingers on the table. Ultimately, Leclair himself ended up in time trouble and accepted a draw.



In any case, Andreiko had an enormous mental advantage over his opponents. Perhaps that was the reason he managed to defeat his opponents with remarkable ease. He liked to tease his opponents by

loudly consuming food or drink, burping loudly, or exhaling heavily on his opponent's neck. In this regard, Andreiko was somewhat reminiscent of Dutch chess player Jan Hein Donner. Even more than his talent for chess, Donner had a gift for teasing and antagonizing his fellow humans. But another example of teasing an opponent is as follows:

"The threat is stronger than the execution"

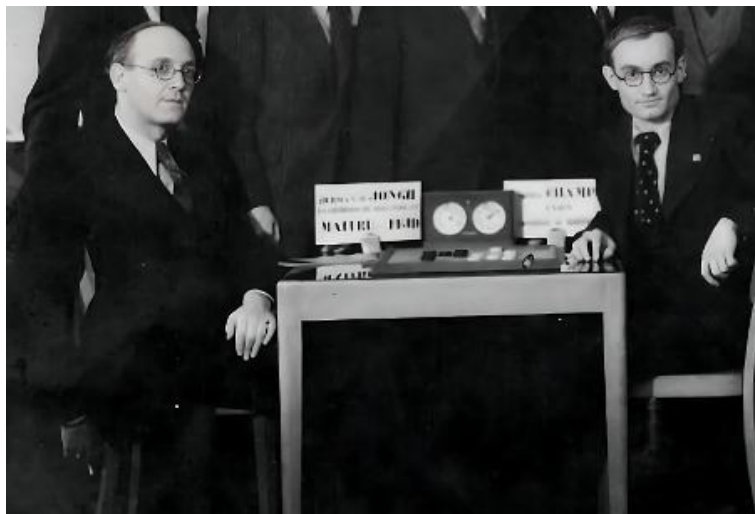
Several sources (see pages 330-332 of 'Chess: Facts and Fables' and C.N.'s 4328 and 4366) have discussed the story that Nimzowitsch complained about an opponent threatening to smoke, with the accused, in various versions, being either Vidmar or Lasker. It should be noted that in CHESS, on September 30, 1963 ('page 400', but actually page 12), Salo Flohr mentioned a different name:

'I remember an incident with Grandmaster Nimzowitsch. He couldn't stand tobacco smoke and during a tournament, he demanded that his opponent not smoke. His rivals agreed. When Bogoljubow placed a full box of cigars on the table before playing against him, Nimzowitsch hurriedly went to the chief arbiter in excitement. The arbiter checked it and said, "But Bogoljubow doesn't smoke." "I know," Nimzowitsch fumed, "but he's threatening to, and the threat in chess is more powerful than the execution."

Flohr didn't necessarily claim to have been an eyewitness, but it's worth noting that the incident is often placed in New York, 1927, where neither Bogoljubow nor Lasker participated."

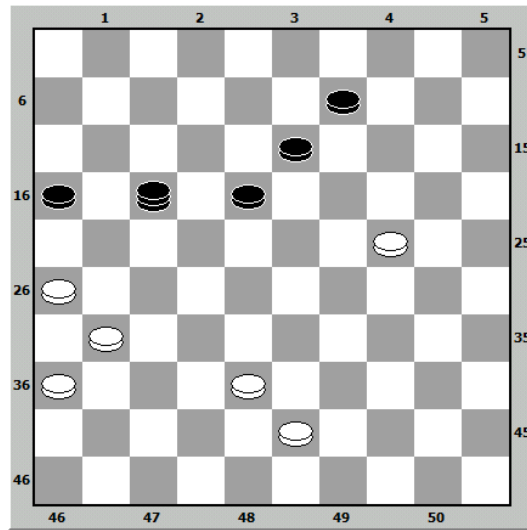
Another draughts player who was allowed to intimidate his opponents early on was the brilliant Isidore Weiss, as the draughts reporter and

Grandmaster Herman de Jongh (Champion of the Netherlands 1924 and France 1938) informed us:



Herman de Jongh tegen Adrien Champin, 1938

The Christmas and New Year festivities brought back memories of the great French champion Isidore Weiss, whom I saw in action in various Christmas tournaments in Paris. Weiss was an extremely brilliant player who was ahead of his time! Their Christmas tournaments are accessible to players of all strengths; only weak players receive handicaps. These handicaps range from 3 pieces to half a piece. This latter handicap consists of one game equal and one game with an advantage of one piece. Since the Christmas tournaments consist of only one game against each participant, players who are handicapped with half a piece receive a draw as a win. Especially with a handicap, Weiss excelled, with his ingenious way of combining with minimal material. When I arrived in Paris in 1921, the so-called "blundering" for the national competitions had not yet been officially abolished. ("Blundering" is the act of removing a piece that forgot to capture). Even this "childish" rule, which never really existed in our country, Weiss sometimes ingeniously exploited. Here's what I saw him do in the Christmas tournament of 1921:



Weiss had to deal with a player who had been given a handicap of 2.5 pieces. He had to give up 2 pieces and achieve a draw as a win in this game. So, it's not surprising that he ended up in such a bad position. Weiss was to move and could force a draw with 1.24-19, 13x24; 2.43-39, 17x50; 3.26-21, 16x27; 4.31x4, and so on. But as I said, the draw meant a loss in this game! Before I continue my story, I must also tell you that Weiss was a true "showman." When he saw a combination, his body jerked backward. He placed both thumbs under the lapels of his jacket and drew the attention of those present by moving his pieces with a loud thud on the board, scaring his opponent even before he knew what was coming!

Here's how Weiss hypnotized his opponent in the above-mentioned position. His body jerked upright, thumbs under the lapels of his jacket, and then he played with a strong thud: 1.38-33!! 17x48. His poor opponent was already frightened when he got two pieces like that! With an even louder thud, 2.24-19! 13x24; and a "knockout" blow preceded the third move: 3.26-21 !!! 16x27?? Poor hypnotized Black player! "I'll capture the king on 48, because it had to capture 2 pieces, and then I'll play 4. 31x4!" Weiss replied, and the game was decided! Something

like this might not be appreciated in our country, but the loser laughed heartily!



Isidore Weiss (Paris) y F. Bouillon (Marseille) en 1906

The multiple world champion Alexei Tsizjov tried to intimidate his opponent Gunter Valneris during the 1994 World Championship by sitting at the table with a Walkman. However, Valneris did not let himself be distracted and even found the music chosen by Tsizjov to be quite good.

Tsizjov is known as the silent assassin due to his ability to assess winning chances during a game, striking suddenly to gain a decisive material advantage. He has created psychological profiles of many opponents in the past:

"My game consists of twenty percent of what everyone calls draughts, they can still understand that, but the rest they don't get. No one realizes that a simple position can lead to a win. That there are even multiple ways to do it. I'm talking about psychology, about philosophy, and everything related to it."



Alexei Tsizjov

Tsizjov knows the strengths and weaknesses of his opponents:

"I know all the important draughts players. During a game, I can tell by their moves, but also by their expressions, whether someone is scared or confident. The psychological aspect is very important at this level because the differences are small. During preparation, I analyze my opponent's games. I especially look at how they lost."

Early on, Tsizjov learned the Dutch language through self-study. Since 1983, he has been engaged in psychology. Later, the autodidact also delved into philosophy and other social sciences.

"Kasparov and Karpov also engage in such matters, but in draughts, these aspects are more crucial than in chess. In our game, the rules and positions themselves are simpler compared to chess. Precisely then, it becomes important to bring in other elements." "I observe how my opponents navigate different situations. I scrutinize all their behaviors. In a way, I subtly prompt them, without them realizing it, to reveal the move they intend to play. This way, I don't have to wait for their move, allowing me to think ahead. It gives me a significant advantage over the competition."

Early in Sijbrand's draughts career, former world champion Piet Roozenburg noted that Sijbrands was an incredibly skilled player but that his shortcomings were more on the psychological level. According to him, Sijbrands lacked the necessary self-critique, showing that at the top level, the differences are small, and psychology plays a significant role.

1.27.1 Business

The psychological skills developed by good draughts players can certainly provide benefits in the business world. Draughts goes beyond mere intellectual sharpness; it's about strategic insight, quick decision-making, stress management, and resilience in the face of setbacks. These talents can be directly applicable in the business world and can lead to improved performance and success in various business scenarios. Here are some ways in which psychological skills of draughts players can impact the business world:

Strategic Thinking:

Strategic thinking is deeply rooted in the DNA of draughts players. They must plan ahead, like a

draughts player who thinks several moves ahead, and anticipate the counter-moves of their opponents. This ability to strategize cleverly and make calculated decisions can seamlessly translate to the business world, where long-term planning and thoughtful decision-making are essential.

Decision Making:

Draughts revolves around making decisions under pressure and uncertainty. Experience gives leaders and entrepreneurs a distinct advantage in decision-making. Derived from similar situations they've experienced before, they can assess effectively what is effective and what isn't, resulting in more effective decision-making and risk management.

Stress Management:

Draughts can be highly stressful, especially during critical moments in a game. The ability to stay calm under pressure and maintain emotional control is equally important in the business world. Strong concentration helps reduce distractions and focus attention on the task at hand, leading to reduced stress as you're less likely to be overwhelmed by external factors.

Resilience in the Face of Setbacks:

In draughts, one mistake can impact the entire game. Draughts players learn to deal with setbacks, rectify errors, and persevere. This resilience is invaluable in the business world, where failures and challenges are inevitable.

Analytical Thinking:

Analyzing positions and variations requires deep analytical thinking. This skill can also be applied to analyzing business data, trends, and performance to make informed decisions.

Leadership and Communication:

While draughts is often played individually, team competitions require draughts players to communicate effectively and collaborate to form a joint strategy. This translates into leadership and communication skills that are valuable in business teams and projects.



Persistence:

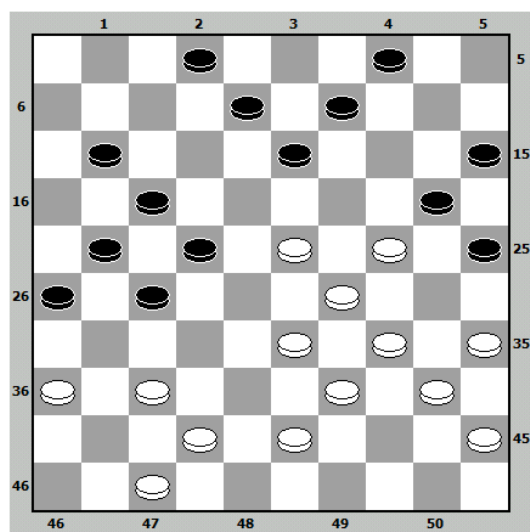
Improving draughts skills requires time, dedication, and persistence. This ability to persist in overcoming challenges is equally relevant in the business world, where success often depends on sustained effort.

In conclusion, the psychological skills developed by good draughts players can certainly benefit the business world. The combination of strategic thinking, decision-making, stress management, and resilience makes draughts players well-equipped to tackle challenges and succeed in various business scenarios."

1.28 Reference Points

Sometimes, finding the right path in checkers can be quite difficult, and that's when reference points are most welcome. These reference points are related to a specific formation of the opponent. For example, we see that Harm Wiersma made use of a weak edge piece, which provided him with reference points:

"However, my opponent aimed for unfavorable exchanges and ended up with a weak edge piece, which gave me some reference points."



In this position, it is very challenging to identify reference points for the direction the stroke should lead. Nevertheless, reference points are present in this position of the former world champion Alexei Tsjizjow. The beautiful win is achieved by:

1. 37-32 27x49 2. 34-30 25x43 3. 42-38 43x32
4. 35-30 49x35 5. 33-28 22x33 6. 29x7 20x18
7. 7-1 35x24 8. 1x21

The well-known chess master H. Kramer also mentioned the reference points, which are more noticeable in chess than in checkers:

"Due to the variety of pieces and rules, chess is excellently suited for blind play. It is precisely this diversity that provides the human memory with reference points."

This is also the explanation for the fact that checkers is much less suitable for blind play: all the pieces are the same, and in this uniformity, it is much harder for the memory to find anchors.



**Ton Sijbrands v Andris Andreiko
World Championship, 1972**

Years ago, Auke Scholma said about the blind checkers of international grandmaster Ton Sijbrands:

"How is it possible that someone armed only with a box of cigars and a bottle of mineral water, but without a checkerboard or writing equipment, stores all those hundreds of moves and thousands of associated variations simultaneously in that one mind? The human mind remains a mystery."

Sijbrands devoted his entire life to checkers, and his record for blind checkers has been 32 games since 2014. The achievement of international grandmaster Erno Prosman in 2012 is also noteworthy, with 30 games of blind checkers. Prosman opted for a career in society at an early stage and holds a highly responsible position at Shell.

1.28.1 Business

In the business universe, reference points can be clarified as certain intriguing enigmas, information gems, event complexities, or situations of complexity that serve as fundamental foundations for the unfolding of strategic decision-making processes, spectacular expansions, and impressive expressions of triumphant initiatives. Analogous to the art of chess, in which skilled players skillfully embark on a quest for key moments, fearless entrepreneurs and visionary enterprises must also devote themselves to the exploration of relevant fabric of reference points to navigate in the currents of business destinies.

Here, with grace, some beloved incarnations of reference points appear in the complex dance of business:

The Orientation Compass of Information:

Exalted reference points can metamorphose into a tableau of sparkling sources of information, produced by the artisans of market research, the oracles of customer feedback, the seers of competition analysis, the visionaries of industry trends, and other guardians of relevant data. This illustrated art of data provides noble guiding strings for clever strategies and serves as an aurora for the faces of opportune growth.

Problem Detectives and Answer Discoverers:

ikewise, illustrious reference points can lift the veil surrounding situations of irregularities, obstacles, or vulnerabilities hiding within organizations. However, these, disguised as reference points, grant fearless companions the courage to go on the offensive and create bold forms of improvement in the structure and choreography of business processes.

Trends and Technological Unfoldings:

The identification of dazzling new developments and revolutionary technologies, revealed through the crystal ball gazing of visionaries, fills the daring vanguard of the enterprise ensemble with inspiring reference points. This allows them to adapt their theatrical products and services to changing customer needs and, as royal ballet masters, strengthen their lead over the competition.

Partnership Potential and Alliance Arts:

Just like brave dancers embracing each other in graceful steps, veiled reference points can arise from promising entanglements of collaboration

opportunities, leading to elevated synergies and joint crescendos of growth opportunities being realized.

Customer Behavior as Melody:

Reference points are sometimes virtuously embodied by the needs, preferences, and harmonious feedback of customers. Like a masterful conductor, this symphony guides the entrepreneurial philharmonic in composing improved products, resounding services, and the symphony of esteemed customer satisfaction.



Inner Strengths and Weaknesses:

Assessing and testing the vital essences and vulnerable weaknesses at the core of a company possesses the alchemy of reference points. Thus, business commanders can unlock the art of competitive control and, with inspired balance, convert their virtuoso competencies into precious competitive advantages.

The Ballet of Market Opportunities:

Reference points reveal themselves in glorious moments of growth opportunities and lush niche

markets, where, through masterful movements, new products can be unveiled or existing products transformed to match the desires of the honored audience.

Recognizing these magisterial reference points and skillfully harnessing their inherent essence is a truly crucial resource for the exceptional theatrical choreography of strategic planning and business development in the overwhelming theater of dynamic and competitive business life."

1.29 Self-assurance

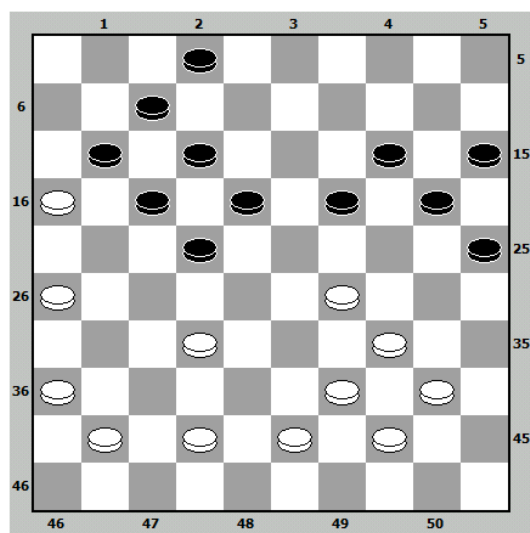
An epic dance unfolds in the intriguing and enigmatic domain of self-awareness, where a meaningful distinction between two intrinsic concepts, Dutch "zelfvertrouwen"(self-confidence) and Dutch "zelfverzekerdheid" (self-assurance) adorns the cosmic horizon like fiery meteorites. These two words, often combined as melodic harmonies, reveal a colorful play of distinctive characteristics, like a maze full of mystery and fascination. It is as if the mind navigates through a labyrinth of inner beliefs, seeking the core of their true essence.

It stands as a monumental rock, firmly grounded, empowering the individual to embrace various tasks and challenges with audacity and resilience. Within the intricate fabric of self-confidence lies the trust in oneself, the knowledge-rich foundations of experience, and the ability to triumph.

Yet, on the horizon of this inner landscape, self-assurance rises like a blazing sun, its rays reaching out to the external world. Here, the display of certainty and conviction towards others manifests, akin to a bubbling fountain radiating strength. Self-assurance, as a spectacle of outward brilliance, seeps into posture, body language, and the elegant symphony of speech. It is self-confidence unfurling outward, the intoxication of self-assurance revealed in the theatrical dance with the audience. In this passionate dance, both concepts intertwine, creating an exuberant tableau of radiance and inner power.

The tapestry of self-knowledge reveals that self-confidence is an inner quality, an ethereal substance rippling within the soul, while self-assurance erupts like a volcanic crater, displaying its presence unmistakably. And, like actors on the stage of life, individuals can carry different levels of self-confidence and self-assurance within them, akin to a vibrant canvas. A shimmering star may confidently present itself on the stage of public speaking but remain entangled in an underground labyrinth of self-doubt in other aspects of life.

Self-assured individuals also understand their abilities and worth but operate under the assumption that they must rely on themselves alone. They also emit an aura of "I don't need anyone" and "I can handle it on my own." This knowledge resides in their minds, yet I suddenly perceived a sense of loneliness in it, as the feeling of being supported and carried seemed absent.



In 1937, Benedictus Springer played a match of 25 games against Maurice Raichenbach, which Raichenbach ultimately won with a score of 26-24. In this challenging position for Springer, he may have played with a bit too much self-assurance when making the move 32-27, but he had to immediately concede the game.

35. 32-27??

A gross blunder that abruptly concludes the game. White seemingly wanted to retain as many free moves as possible but overlooks after:

35. 22x31 36. 26x37 17-21 37. 16x27 25-30
38. 34x25 18-22 39. 27x18 12x45 40. 44-40 45x34
41. 39x30 20-24

White resigns.



**Maurice Raichenbach against Benedictus Springer on
28 May 1937. Photo: FMJD**

A lamentable end to such a finely set-up game. Springer's attack was risky, no doubt, but it opened perspectives, and even though Raichenbach refuted it instructively, White's assault demonstrated commendable initiative. White's 35th move is a grave error made by Springer, perhaps due to too much self-assurance. Maybe Springer's chances, when he still had an advantage, lay more in defense, and he would have been wiser to respond to Raichenbach's attacking tactics with a counter-attack. Nonetheless, the tension now reaches its peak, and the further proceedings of our countryman become all the more valuable and interesting.

Pieter Bergsma emphasized the importance of coming to the board with self-assurance: "Certainly, you can fight for victory. Not coming to the board scared but with self-assurance. Focused! I believe this is a strong point for me. If you haven't faced difficulties during the day and everything is going well, you can give your best without getting sidetracked during the game. And then you can fight for the win..."

In 1972, Harm Wiersma also displayed great self-assurance in his potential performance in that year's World Championship and stated: "I ended up with six points ahead (in the Dutch championship) of the second-place finisher, and that says something. I don't consider myself inferior to Sijbrands, nor to Andreiko and Gantwarg. That's why I believe in my own chances for first place." An impressively confident attitude from an eighteen-year-old, who in 1971 wouldn't have stood a chance against Sijbrands. Wiersma remarked on this: "I have become much more independent. Last year, I didn't care about it all. I was also dealing with my final exams, so I had

less time to devote to draughts. That immediately penalized me. I ended up in sixth place."

Ton Sijbrands also possessed considerable self-assurance. Unfortunately, in the Netherlands, you're advised not to stick your neck out too much. Doing so might cost you your head. Sticking your head above the crowd means that your head will be mowed down along with the other stalks of wheat or corn. Therefore, it's better to remain silent and not stand out, a notion with which I never agreed, and certainly, Sijbrands didn't either, as he had shown several times many years ago that he wasn't ashamed of his draughts skills. Some of his Dutch colleagues took offense at that attitude, particularly the audience, who perceived it as arrogance. Sijbrands himself expressed, "I certainly don't have an inferiority complex. It should be acceptable to say that you've played well. I am quite modest, but I don't engage in false modesty."

1.29.1 Business

In the unfathomable forest of the business world, both attributes rise like cosmic stars in the sky of success. Self-confidence acts as the fiery compass that steers thoughtful decisions and embraces challenges with fearless determination. Self-assurance, like a blinding fireball, reaches out to inspire others and orchestrates a symphony of

business relationships while radiating professional leadership in all its grandeur.



Thus, these related concepts dance, entwined in an enchanting interplay of perplexing uniqueness and explosive presentation, on the vast stage of the business world. And like an artistic composition, they require constant development and maintenance, akin to a magical ritual sealed by achieving goals, absorbing knowledge and experience, embracing positive influences, and welcoming challenging symphonies.

1.30 Superstition

Molimard is a remarkable player, but he could achieve even more if he didn't stand in his own way. He acknowledges it himself, he is "superstitious". This superstition sometimes diverts his attention and plays strange tricks on him. This became evident during the major tournament in Rotterdam for the world championship in 1912. All expectations were focused on Molimard and the beginning was indeed splendid. Weis was defeated twice in a row, having no grasp of this grandmaster's tactical play. Hoogland was the only one to inflict a defeat on Molimard in this competition. Then came a tragic event that would also impact Molimard's subsequent play. He held the lead, but faced a challenging day, with two matches against De Haas. All omens were favorable and the Frenchman was full of confidence. After all, he had recently beaten this opponent in a match. Were there not numerous dark forces bestowing upon him a kind of invincibility cloak?

First and foremost, there was "The Hat" (no sacrilege intended, reader, pay attention to the capital letters, it truly deserves them). Compared to this headwear, everything else paled. Fakirs who willingly buried themselves alive, or turned their bodies into pincushions with daggers, or hung upside down from a tree branch for three weeks – child's play compared to the protective power of the hat! Moreover, whether we were to turn the world upside down or stand on our heads to view the world as it is, the essence would remain entirely the same; at most, our appreciation would increase. In short, the hat was the hat-of-the-match against Weiss. If it is still not understood, it may never be. But that wasn't all.

There was also the pencil of victory against Fabre and the table where Molimard, with his back to the mirror, had seized the lead. Unfortunately, there were likely more relics, but alas, we cannot always uncover everything.



Dr. Alfred Molimard

With this, we must be content, dear reader. The rest we can leave to your own fertile imagination. Did we say too much when we noted that all signs were favorable? Never before has good faith been so cruelly betrayed as now. The games began. How exactly this happened, we cannot describe precisely. The accounts of what occurred vary greatly. A popular interpretation is that everything had to do with the magical pencil, whose protective powers fell short. The table, tasked with Molimard's mystical duties, also failed miserably, and even the hat wasn't completely blameless. It is also possible that a keen mind might think that it is not tactful to summon too

many signs of luck, due to the danger of rivalry among them, as everyone seeks to outshine one another, resulting in a negative outcome. Regardless, it remains a mystery and always will. Molimard lost both matches. An ideal world crumbled, and with tears in his eyes, he left the playing room. The 1912 tournament, despite high expectations, remains cloaked in puzzles and mystery.

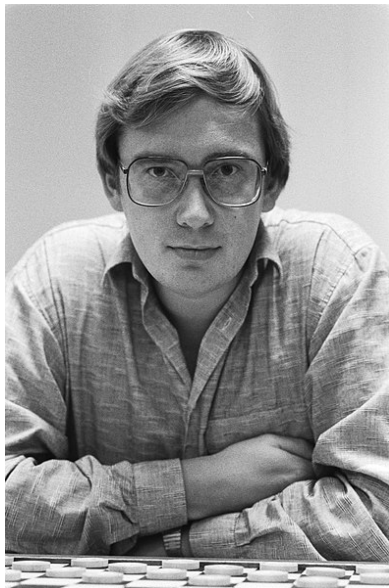


**Match between Anatoli Gantwarg and Harm Wiersma
National Archief, Fotocollectie Anefo, 1981**

Harm Wiersma already discussed in 1984 during his match against the Russian Vadim Virny that top players are constantly pursued by compulsions and superstitions. He then provided two examples, of which I will present the first: for the first five rounds, he played in his Bordeaux-red A.S. jogging suit. The sixth round, he wore his blue sponsor's outfit. At such moments, the thought involuntarily arises that perhaps something might go wrong. Especially because on that day, my splendid Interpolis pen went

missing, the same pen that had recorded the first five rounds of good games. Now, my self-assurance was somewhat shaken. Coincidentally, Virny presented him with genuine problems in this sixth game.

Wiersma won the match against Gantwarg in 1981, but match nerves were significant. Even the support of hypnosis couldn't prevent Wiersma from seeing "apparitions" in the closing phase of the match. The world champion remained somewhat tensely composed, consolidating the lead, relying on straws like superstition. It had been observed that Wiersma played better on one side of the table (the left), and he also secured victory there. He was not willing to say more than admitting that he was indeed superstitious.



Rob Clerc
National Archief, Fotocollectie Anefo, 1985

Even the world champion Gantwarg grappled with superstition during his match against Rob Clerc in 1985. Therefore, he sought a swift draw. Not to please the birthday-celebrating chief arbiter Thon Noppen, but due to a kind of superstition. "Many grandmasters have lost important matches on their birthdays. And since the organization had decided to somewhat celebrate my birthday, I wasn't inclined towards a prolonged match," said the Soviet Russian.

When the renowned Dutch chess player Timman was asked if he was superstitious, he openly admitted in 1989:

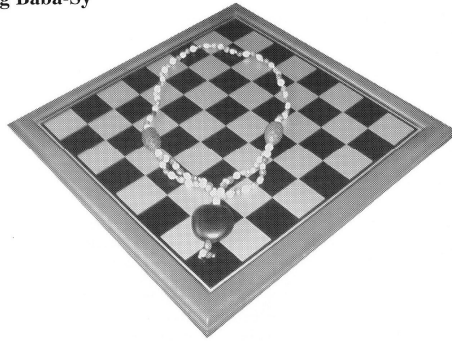
"To some extent, yes. I wrote a story about it in Elsevier, where I criticized the phenomenon of superstition. However, I do hold onto certain rituals. For example, I treat a book as a talisman. When I have it with me, I believe I'll perform well in a tournament. It's a rather limited form of superstition."

In 1990, Sijbrands played a 20-game match against Alexei Tsjizjov for the world championship, and the final score was 20-20. Sijbrands was stronger and missed winning against this player three times. Considering Sijbrands was 50 years old at the time and Tsjizjov was 14 years younger, it was certainly not a bad outcome. Sijbrands couldn't have asked for a better start to the match: he defeated his opponent in the second match with a homemade variant. After that, draws were plentiful. Sijbrands was plagued by superstition and anxieties, and he dreaded playing. Yet, once he was seated at the board, the tension vanished, and he entered a trance. Nevertheless, he would have preferred to engage in the battle in silence, without an audience, as noises irritated the

Dutchman. Creaking doors were replaced with curtains, but the rustling of spectators continued to bother him.

Baba Sy often walked with chains, and those whispering around him would say, "No, it's not superstition for him. They might look like rosaries, but it's his trade."

Halsketting Baba-Sy



Necklace from Baba-Sy

There was a news story about a famous draughts player, without clarifying his real name, who had purchased a talisman from the old marabout, but apparently, this amulet didn't bring the expected luck. Consequently, this player refused to pay for the amulet, also known as "gri gri" or "fétiche":

Upon our arrival, we witnessed a rather animated dispute between the old marabout of the tribe and the famous Senegalese draughts player (probably Kandie). This player had, it seems, bought a "gri gri" from the marabout, that is to say, a "fétiche", and not for nothing – twenty francs, solely for a verse from the Koran, surrounded by kabbalistic signs and folded into small squares, rolled in a piece of leather. During the month our black man wore his "gri gri", it seems he had no benefit from it.

Hence the refusal to pay for the amulet, a dispute that Mr. Barbier managed to settle not without difficulty. "Gri gri" plays the largest role in the lives of these Africans. They use them for all their needs, against all illnesses, and pay their marabouts unbelievable prices for these amulets, sometimes even a hundred to a hundred and fifty francs.

Such situations also occur in other African countries. During the championship of Zambia in 2013, Hermen Kroesbergen informed us that a draughts player had used "juju" (magic) to win. There was a lot at stake, as the winner of the tournament would qualify for the African Championship in Niger. And when something is at stake, suspicion naturally arises that someone might have used magic. People visit a nganga (spiritual healer) and receive some 'medicine' – herbs and powders symbolizing their desired achievement – which they then carry with them.

Things didn't go well in 1994 for the Russian draughts prodigy Alexei Tsjizjov. Out of the first twelve matches, he managed to win only one. Yet, as a superstitious person, he wanted to claim his seventh title:

"Six is the number of the devil, seven is safe."

Speaking of numbers, for Harm Wiersma, the number 2 played a significant role in his life. He used to live at number 22, and then he moved to number 2. His phone number began with a double 2. He also revealed that there was a clairvoyant living in The Hague with whom he had contact. This man possessed remarkable abilities, as he had predicted the outcome of Wiersma's match against Gantwarg in 1981.

1.30.1 Business

Superstition can also play a role in the international business world, albeit to a lesser extent than in some other cultural contexts. Various business practices and behaviors can be influenced by superstition, often subtly and implicitly. Here are some examples:



Numbers:

Certain cultures attach great importance to specific numbers and dates, which are considered to bring luck or bad luck. These beliefs can impact crucial business decisions, ranging from timing important

meetings to signing contracts and launching new business initiatives. For example, the number 8 is considered particularly auspicious in Chinese culture due to its phonetic similarity to the word "wealth." On the other hand, the number 4 is often avoided because it sounds like the word for "death." These cultural sensitivities play a role in shaping international business interactions and strategies.

Colors:

Colors can also influence superstition in the business world. Some cultures associate certain colors with luck, prosperity, or misfortune. Choosing the right colors for brand logos, marketing materials, and even clothing can be important in international business relationships.

Gifts and Presents:

The giving and receiving of gifts can be influenced by superstition. Some cultures avoid giving sharp objects like knives because they could be considered unlucky. Other gifts, such as watches, might also be avoided due to their association with time and the finite nature of life.

Feng Shui:

In certain Asian cultures, great importance is placed on Feng Shui when arranging offices and positioning furniture. Feng Shui principles, which aim to stimulate positive energy and prosperity, can influence the layout of an office and even the orientation of doors.

Greetings and Etiquette:

Business meetings and negotiations can also carry a touch of superstition regarding greetings, handshakes, and other forms of etiquette. Different cultures have specific rules and beliefs about how to

greet and behave during meetings, which can influence the dynamics of doing business.

It is important to recognize and respect that superstition is a cultural and subjective aspect. In international business relationships, understanding the cultural sensitivities and beliefs of your business partners is crucial to building successful and respectful relationships.



Harm Wiersma, 1977
Steering towards business success

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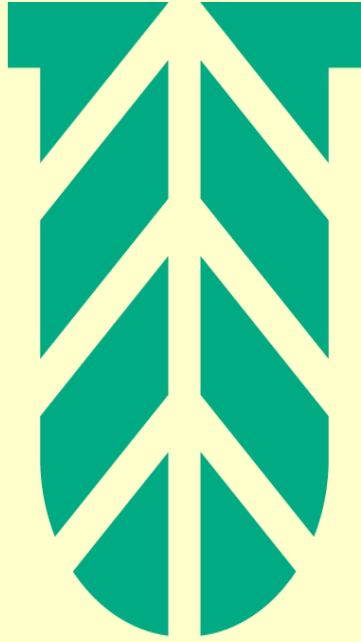
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